

PANAMA PADRE

Moss Loveridge

PANAMA PADRE

Panama Padre

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PANAMA PADRE

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
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BOOK ONE

1	First Sight	8
2	Pioneering	12
3	Under Colombian Rule	17
4	Adventures in the Saddle	23
5	The Railroad	28
6	The Mission House	33
7	Revolution	38
8	Medical Work	44
9	Reflections	48
10	Animal Life	53
11	The Storm Bursts	57
12	Fever	63
13	The Signing of the Peace Treaty	67
14	Costa Rica and Bocas del Toro	72
15	Following the Buccaneers	78
16	All in a Day's Work	82
17	The Secession of Panama	87

BOOK TWO

18	The Birth of the Republic	93
19	The Yellow Fever Epidemic	99
20	Honeymoon in Jamaica	103
21	Hospital Chaplain	109
22	Churches, Old and New	114
23	Of Friends and Festivals	121
24	Of Buccaneers and Indians	126
25	In a Convict Prison	132
26	Mud Slides	138
27	The Dream of Centuries Becomes a Reality	144
28	Changing Times	151
29	Removal to Balboa	157
30	Passage to the United States and Canada	162
31	Farewell	168

PANAMA PADRE

ILLUSTRATIONS

S Moss Loveridge	5
Main Street, Culebra	11
French canal excavation works, Culebra	13
Lottery office and Bishop's Palace, Panama City	18
French excavation works, Bas Obispo	25
The Mission House, Culebra	34
Culebra Baptist Church	52
The signing of the Peace Treaty	69
First Street, Bocas Del Toro	74
The village of Cruces	79
Culebra Baptist Chapel	86
Pay day at Culebra	97
The wedding of Moss Loveridge and Ethel Pratt	104
Moss Loveridge and family	108
Ambulance at Ancon Hospital	112
Sunday School outing to Gatun	117
Young Men's Institute, Culebra	120
The island of Taboga	128
Loading of a spoil train, Culebra Cut	139
Mud slide, Culebra Cut	142
SS Ancon, Culebra Cut	147
John Stevens, Charles Magoon and WC Gorgas	150
Chorillo Baptist Church Sunday School outing	152
American Sunday School picnic	160

PANAMA PADRE



Rev. S Moss Loveridge.

INTRODUCTION

This book was written by my grandfather, the Rev. Samuel Moss Loveridge, after his return from Panama to the United Kingdom late in 1919; he utilised his detailed diaries and extensive records to compile the book. It is, hence, autobiographical. The manuscript was submitted after the Second World War by Moss' brother, Arthur Loveridge, to his (Arthur's) publisher but it was not published.

The departure of Moss Loveridge to Panama in 1900 at the age of 23 was remarkable but he came from a remarkable family. It was his father, Thomas Loveridge, who started the marine engineering business in Cardiff known as Loveridge Ltd; this company provided financial support to Moss which enabled him to succeed. Thomas and Alice Mary (née Moss) Loveridge had eleven children of which Moss was the second.

Moss sought and found fulfilment overseas but he was not the only traveller in the family. The eldest child, Maria Louisa "Daisy", travelled to China where she married Dr Herbert Stanley Jenkins in Shanghai Cathedral (but that is another story as Rudyard Kipling would say). Alexander was a linguist and travelled much in Europe as a commercial traveller on behalf of Loveridge Ltd and later travelled to Polynesia and Australia for his health. Ernest Ebenezer went to New York and found employment there. Arthur travelled to East Africa where he stayed for many years and later lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts before retiring to St Helena Island in the South Atlantic.

Moss was a very determined man and a devout Christian; these two characteristics together made him a very successful missionary. Additionally, though, Moss was erudite and well read, he was good at healing, he was an excellent naturalist and he was a very practical man. These accomplishments seem to make him formidable but he was, in fact, able to communicate well with all levels of society. No less remarkable was Ethel Rebecca Pratt, Moss' future wife. After a childhood exposed to the relative comforts of Kingston, Jamaica, she joined Moss at the age of 19 in the Mission House at Culebra, a small town in the jungle. Moss and Ethel endured many hardships and privations in Culebra but it is ironic that after removal late in 1917 to a modern house in the American Canal Zone it was Ethel's illness that led to the couple and their two children returning very regretfully to the UK in December 1919. In later years their eldest son, Guy Moss, my father, was nostalgic for the life he had known in Panama; in fact he returned to Jamaica in the early 1930s to seek a new career there but was not successful.

I am fortunate in holding Moss' scrapbooks and other documents which include photographs and correspondence; included with the documents that I hold is a piece of wood taken from the cladding of Moss' first Mission House; in this piece of wood is a bullet hole (see page 52 of this book).

Although I had been aware of the existence of Moss' manuscript it was only in 1990 that I decided that it deserved a wider audience; hence, I started to edit it with a view to publication. The editing involved improving the syntax (the manuscript was somewhat colloquial), moving blocks of text around into better subject and chronological order to obtain a more coherent set of chapters, adding some historical information and adding a few family details. Care was taken to retain the author's style as far as possible.

John Loveridge
Brighton, August 1995

PANAMA PADRE

BOOK 1

1900 - 1903

UNDER THE COLOMBIAN FLAG

PANAMA PADRE

Chapter 1

FIRST SIGHT

Just before I left Great Britain at the age of 23 years in August 1900 for the Isthmus of Panama, which was then a province of The United States of Colombia, the news came to hand of the attack by revolutionary (liberal) soldiers on the city of Panama. The engagement took place at Corozal and along the railway line to the Caledonia Bridge; the fighting was so intense that as the passenger train drew near the city, the few passengers had to lie flat on the floor of the carriages to the music of bullets whizzing over their heads. This was to be merely the beginning of several years of unrest and violence.

In those early days, Panama had an unenviable reputation of being anything but a health resort, the old fable of there being one death for every sleeper on the railway line during its construction being generally believed. The truth is that though the mortality during the construction of the Panama Railroad was very high, the estimated number of sleepers required for the whole railroad would be in the region of 140,000 and at no time were there more than six to seven thousand labourers employed on the work. But if the construction of the railroad was costly in human lives, so also was the Canal during the French days.

Dr William Crawford Gorgas, whose name will live forever as the one who cleaned up Havana and Panama, ridding both cities of yellow fever, stated that the French during their attempt at construction of the Canal had lost about one third of all their white employees; a total in eight years of twenty thousand lives. So when my mother told our family doctor of my expected departure for Panama, he replied, "Well, Mrs Loveridge, all I can say is that if your son is intending to go to Panama, I should send out his coffin on the same steamer." (Mr. John F. Wallace, the first Chief Engineer to be appointed by the United States government after taking over the work of the construction of the Canal in 1904, was reputed to have actually taken the precaution of bringing his coffin with him.)

Under what circumstances did I come to be removing to Panama? I was born on 14th June 1877, the second of 11 children, at 34 Etnam Street, Leominster, Herefordshire, where my father, Thomas, was a partner in an agricultural machinery business. I had been named after my maternal grandfather and am normally known by my second name, Moss; hence it was that my mother used to say when I was a child, "Little Mossy, don't be crossy". Upon my father starting a new marine engineering business in Cardiff in 1886 we removed to Penarth, a small seaside town near Cardiff. My schooling was provided at Mr Legg's School, Westbourne Road, Penarth and the Cardiff Higher Grade School where I matriculated in 1892 in mathematics. From 1897 to 1900 I studied theology, the first year at Cliff College, Curber, Derbyshire and the final two years at Harley College, Bow, London, both colleges being owned by the East London Institute for Home and Foreign Missions, later known as the Regions Beyond Missionary Union. At Harley College I played football in the college team. During the 1898 college vacations I was preaching in London, Wellingborough and Uckfield, Sussex and at the Watford Tent Mission and on 2nd July 1900 I had the honour of being ordained at the Bunyan Baptist Church, Kingston-Upon-Thames as a Minister of the Church. And so it was that I set sail to Panama to follow my chosen profession as a missionary.

To set the scene I will briefly describe the climate in Panama. The temperature changes but little, it being between 85 and 95 degrees F during the day in the shade. The wet season is from April to December during when it rains most days, although much of the rain falls between midday and 2.00 p.m. As can be imagined the rain is heavy and can, in the south, average 40 inches per month in the wet season. In Colon

PANAMA PADRE

the annual rainfall averages 130 inches while sometimes over six inches falls in one hour. As for the dry season, it is wonderful; one experiences cloudless blue skies with a gentle north wind.

Just one month after being ordained I sailed to the Isthmus of Panama in the SS "Ashanti", then carrying a cargo of coal for Colon. During the voyage I caught a flying fish which flew over the deck, this I stuffed and later sent to my brother Arthur, then aged 9, who was and is a keen naturalist. As will be seen, I also have a consuming interest in natural history but, unlike my brother Arthur, I did not make a career of it.

In fact prior to my departure from Britain I had to give my pet vixen, "Vick", to a local zoo. At dawn on the twenty first day of the voyage from England we sighted the high mountains of Colombia and we docked at Colon, which actually stands on Manzanilla Island, the same evening. As our ship approached the Isthmus, the coast line with its dense tropical foliage and its waving palm and coconut trees was a very impressive sight. But Colon in those early days was anything but an attractive place, with its old wooden wharves, its dilapidated shops and shanties all made of wood and roofed with corrugated iron and provided with narrow verandas on which all the family cooking was usually undertaken. The whole town had a very tumbledown appearance; the railway ran down the middle of the main street and, after a tropical downpour, the native buggies drawn by half-famished ponies, often sank up to their axles in the mud and water.

And what a cosmopolitan place Colon was with its negroes from the West Indies, its native-speaking population, its Chinese shop-keepers and stores run by both natives and Jews. There you would meet with Americans, English, French, Cubans, Italians, Spaniards, West Indians and people from fifty other countries, while half a dozen different languages could be daily heard in the narrow streets. Little children ran about the streets quite nude.

As our steamer only arrived alongside the wharf on Saturday an hour before sunset and the last train across the Isthmus had departed some two hours earlier, there was nothing for it but to reconcile myself to remaining on board until Monday morning. Then I could take the 8 a.m. train to Culebra, my new hometown and the highest point on the Isthmus, where the New French Company was still carrying on the work of excavation for the Canal but on a very small scale. So on Sunday I attended the services at the Wesleyan church, where the Rev AW Geddes introduced myself and invited me to take part. Returning to the ship at night I found the mosquitoes very bad and there was little sleep for me or for anyone else on board.

Early next morning I started on my first journey across the Isthmus on what was once one of the most costly, as well as one of the most profitable, railways in the world. On taking the train at Colon on the Caribbean coast for the city of Panama on the Pacific coast, one would naturally expect to travel nearly due west, but one would be surprised to find oneself travelling south. This is because the city of Panama is actually 22½ miles east of the city of Colon instead of west; a glance at the map will explain this.

That first trip across the Isthmus on the old single track Panama Railroad, before the construction of the present line, was unforgettable. No sooner had the train started than a native policeman came to each passenger with a big book in which all were required to sign their names, nationality, place of embarkation and intended destination. On asking why, I was informed that it was because the Isthmus, then flying the Colombian flag, was in the throes of one of its periodical revolutions and the information was required as a security check. The train left the outskirts of Colon, passing the old French town of Cristobal on the right with its two old palaces, built for Ferdinand de Lesseps and his son and then passed over an artificial causeway that connects Manzanilla Island with the mainland. On the left there are extensive mangrove swamps, while on the right is an old French dry-dock; after the mangrove swamps with their dense undergrowth, the train passed to higher ground as we reached Monkey Hill (later to be renamed Mount Hope) Cemetery on the left.

Leaving Monkey Hill the train passed through tropical jungle which was so dense that the branches of some of the trees often brushed the windows of the passenger carriages, while stretches of swamp, nearly hidden by the overhanging verdure, were frequent on both sides of the line. From Monkey Hill, passing Mindi on the way, to Gatun station which stood on a bend of the eastern bank of the Chagres River was a

PANAMA PADRE

run of five miles. On the opposite shore of the river stood the old native village of Gatun composed of some fifty or more huts, some built of wood and corrugated iron, others of bamboo and thatched with palm; from here bananas were shipped to the USA. Every trace of this ancient village was later to disappear to make room for the site of the Canal locks and spillway.

The next portion of the journey lay through some of the grandest and densest primeval forest, a veritable paradise for the naturalist, and if I pause here to describe some of it, it is only because so much of it with so many of the native villages were all to disappear some years later in the rising waters of the Gatun Lake. As the train sped on its journey we passed great giant cedro and espabe trees towering up to, and often over, 100 feet and covered with numerous creepers and orchids of every variety and hue. There were also numerous species of palm trees and clusters of bamboo, while other trees and undergrowth were so densely interwoven that the jungle was impenetrable except with the aid of a machete to clear a path. This swamp and jungle just teemed with hidden life. There were snakes of every variety from the non-poisonous boa-constrictor, averaging about 12 feet in length, to the deadly fer-de-lance, tozzy-gough and bushmaster.

Some of the rivers and swamps abounded with cayman and crocodiles, locally known as alligators; many of the latter reaching 16 to 18 feet in length. (For many years I had the skull and hide of one that measured 17 feet from its snout to the tip of its tail.) Monkeys were common, but they usually kept out of sight; jaguars, pumas, ocelots, deer and numerous other denizens of the forest all inhabited the jungle. The most gorgeous birds and butterflies of every hue and colour abounded.

Between the next two stopping places, Lion Hill and Ahorca Lagarto, lay the Black Swamp; the nightmare of the engineers who first built the line. The Black Swamp extended for two-thirds of a mile and had an unenviable reputation for occasionally and without warning engulfing hundreds of yards of railway line, and completely dislocating traffic, as well as an insatiable appetite for swallowing the thousands of tons of earth and rock that from time to time were dumped into it. On subsequent journeys, more than once during the reconstruction of the sunken track, in company with other passengers, I had to disembark from the train and wade round the edge of the swamp by a mud path, to re-embark on another train at the other end of the swamp. Leaving the Black Swamp, the train made stops at Ahorca Lagarto, Bohio, Frijoles, Tabernilla, and passed over Barbacoas Bridge which crossed the Chagres River. At the time that this bridge was erected, in 1854, it was reputed to be the longest in the world; it consisted of six wrought iron spans each over one hundred feet in length.

Having crossed the bridge the train stopped at San Pablo before reaching Mamei. Mamei had no railroad station but was the passing place for the two trains travelling in opposite directions from the railroad termini of Colon and Panama respectively. On leaving Mamei my train stopped at Gorgona, Matachin, Bas Obispo, Las Cascadas and Empire (or Emperador). I mention the names of these stations because together with others lying between Gatun and Bas Obispo, stretching a distance of nearly 25 miles, they too, with much of the forest, were also destined to be submerged in later years by the creation of the Gatun Lake. Soon after passing Gold Hill, the highest point of the Isthmus, we stopped at the old town of Culebra, the highest point on the old railroad. Here, 260 feet above sea level, the last rail was laid at midnight, in darkness and pouring rain, on 27th January 1855. The following day the first locomotive ever to cross the American continent passed from ocean to ocean.

At this place I alighted; Culebra was to be the centre of my work amongst the English speaking West Indians and was to be my home for the next seventeen years.

PANAMA PADRE



Main Street, Culebra.

PANAMA PADRE

Chapter 2

PIONEERING

The old Culebra railroad station stood on the very edge of the Canal bank and from here an excellent view of the French cutting, both north and south, could be obtained. This station would eventually disappear to make room for the Canal.

On disembarking from the train at Culebra, I found the Jamaican day-school teacher with an interested group of coloured people waiting to greet me. As the train moved away the teacher stepped on the line expecting me to follow; having just come from England where walking on the line was a punishable offence, I said, "But you are not allowed to walk on the line, are you?" I shall not soon forget the grin on his face as he answered, "Why, it is the only road we have to walk on here". I was soon to learn the truth of this as most of my horseback journeys later had to be made on the railroad track.

After a walk of about five minutes we reached the building that was used as a church. It was situated on the side of the narrow cobbled way that served as a street and that was pitted with puddles made by the feet of the packhorses. At one time the church building was probably a native house; it consisted of just four walls made of old boards which let in the daylight, as well as lizards, rats and vampire bats, to say nothing of cockroaches over two inches long. The partitions that had once divided it into rooms had all been removed and it was roofed with old corrugated iron; when it rained (sometimes five or six inches in the hour) the noise was so great that even if one shouted one could not be heard. When a service was in progress and the rain began to fall, the congregation had to resort to singing till the rain ceased.

At Culebra I found a dozen church members who formed a nucleus with which to start my activities. From the beginning the church building was crowded out and there were often as many listening outside as inside; these congregations were made up of people who had come from Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and other West Indian islands to work on the Canal. To summon the people to services we had hung outside this building, and other churches, a piece of old railway line four or five feet long and an iron car pin (used for coupling freight cars) with which to strike it. These improvised bells could easily be heard a mile or more away and continued in use until, in the process of time, new and better buildings were erected when bronze bells were imported from England to replace them.

Here in a tiny corner of this building, partitioned off for a vestry, I was expected to sleep. This was impossible, for as soon as it grew dark the aforesaid cockroaches, lizards, rats and bats all came to life, to the accompaniment of the 'zim' of numerous mosquitoes inside as well as outside the mosquito net.

Happily within a day or two I was able to secure more comfortable accommodation through the courtesy of the French Chief of Section. My new home consisted of a very large room on the upper floor of an empty building previously occupied by the Colombian police and situated on the side of a hill. I was supposed to be the only occupant of the building, but I soon discovered my mistake. No sooner was it nightfall than the denizens of the building began to swarm out till the place soon became like a miniature zoo and though I had it repeatedly scrubbed and cleaned this seemed to make no difference. An old black woman came daily to cook and clean for me and she used to serve up my food, Jamaica fashion, swimming in sweet oil, much to my disgust. One morning I found her washing up my breakfast china in the water in which I had taken my morning bath. When reproved, she indignantly replied that she was not proud and that, rather than carry more water up the hill (for all water was carried up by the women on their heads, no

PANAMA PADRE

other means of supply existing), she had before now made her tea with my bath water. Missing a pair of socks from my laundry one day I made enquiries of my washer-woman. Quite frankly the woman explained that as she was suffering from the cold she had put them on to keep her own feet warm and, pulling up her skirt, showed me my missing socks on her own feet. I told her she might keep my socks and that I would find someone else to do my washing.

It was not long before I conducted my first funeral on the Isthmus, that of a woman who had been living out of wedlock with one of the subordinate officials of the French Canal Company. The man came to me in tears asking me to visit his "female" who was dying. I did so and talked and prayed with her. She was buried in the customary white coffin always used for unmarried people regardless of the fact that she had been living in open sin; all married people were buried in coffins draped with black. A torrential downpour filled the shallow grave to overflowing and the water had to be baled out before the coffin could be lowered, not an uncommon occurrence in Panama.

In addition to Culebra, there were two other small towns where I held services: Tabernilla, some 15 miles away and with a population of over one thousand, and Frijoles (Spanish for beans) three miles on and with less than half that number of inhabitants. At Tabernilla I had the use of an old French camp building that had previously been a labourers' barracks; this was fixed up with a platform and benches so that we could hold services. Such were conditions on the Isthmus that out of the thousand people in Tabernilla there were only three married couples; it was not to be wondered at that we only had three church members. Here I found a most interesting old negro who had been born in slavery and was a big boy when in 1838 all slaves under the British flag became free. He was living under the most primitive conditions, sleeping under a lean-to made of a few old sheets of corrugated iron resting on either side of a central pole. He used to sit at the open end and do his cooking on the ground, crawling underneath whenever it came on to rain; the lean-to had neither door nor window. His hair was white with age and he cultivated a little ground around his hut.



French excavation works, Culebra Cut.

PANAMA PADRE

Much of my travelling, when through the bush, had to be undertaken on horseback, often swimming across swollen streams or rivers. On my arrival at Culebra, an old West Indian planter of Scottish descent offered me the loan of a horse which I gladly accepted. He was a sturdy little animal, little bigger than a large pony, surefooted and a good climber. On one occasion when I had to cross a stream, in somewhat marshy ground, that we could easily have jumped, nothing would persuade him to venture. So I dismounted and taking off my jacket blindfolded him by tying it over his head. Then taking the reins I started to lead him across. Alas his over-caution and slow movement caused him to sink in the soft mud in the stream; it took four men with ropes to free him.

Often when travelling by train to take a service at some village at which the train was not scheduled to stop, I would ask the conductor (guard) if he could arrange to stop the train for me, which he invariably did. On one occasion, however, it happened that the Superintendent of the Railroad was travelling in his own special saloon car attached to the rear of the train so that the conductor explained that under the circumstances it was not advisable for him to take the risk. So I disembarked at Tabernilla anticipating a three mile walk along the railroad track, through jungle and swamp, in the heat of the mid-day sun which was intense. However the Station Agent seeing me alight from the departing train would not hear of my walking and ordered five men with a pump car to take me along the track to Frijoles.

Here my good deacon Henry Clarke and his wife Susan, two fine Christian people, turned out of their two-roomed hut that I might stay there whenever I went to Frijoles to conduct a service and found it necessary to remain for the night. This primitive home was built on piles like all other huts in Frijoles because of the occasional floods caused by the great Chagres River overflowing its banks and inundating the village. His hut consisted of two tiny rooms made out of old boards and packing cases; the rooms being papered with old Spanish newspapers brown with age, the roof being made of corrugated iron, but everything spotlessly clean.

Henry was a Jamaican negro and when I first met him he was barefooted, wearing only a shirt and a ragged pair of trousers sadly frayed at the bottom of the legs. Although possessing the barest elementary education his passion for service and winning others to Christ was such that I felt some better use should be made of his gifts than that of merely cultivating plantains and yams in his little bit of clearing. So I offered Henry the task of teaching some tiny tots their alphabet and using his spare time for preaching, but as a tutor he was not a success. So I changed his task and put him on a salary giving him the title of "District Visitor".

Here Henry found his own; it would have been difficult to find any one better suited to the task for he became a most acceptable preacher, a real instructor of others in the Word of God, taking both Sunday and week-night services at some of our village churches; he also proved himself a most useful visitor in the homes of his own people where he was greatly beloved and showed much tact and skill in straightening out some of their domestic difficulties and above all in leading many to Christ. Henry had many quaint sayings, some of which were Jamaican proverbs. He often used to say to me, "The trouble with our people, Minister, is that they carry their brains in other peoples' skulls". Another favourite saying was, "Don't call the alligator big mouth till you are well past him".

It was while I was sleeping in Henry's hut one night that the driver ants swarmed into the hut. These ants, when they come into a building, swarm over everything and rats, bats, cockroaches and all living things not quick enough in escaping are bitten to death. Usually, when their arrival is discovered in time, it is a practice to pour all the boiling water obtainable over the approaching hoards, at the same time soaking old rags in kerosene and laying them across their path to impede their advance. In spite of all this, it was not an uncommon thing for the natives to have to vacate their homes until the unwelcome intruders had gone. I have known, at a later time, the ants swarm into the Mission House at Culebra when I have had a busy time before I could be rid of them. But in this native hut I blissfully slept. The ants must have swarmed over everything except my bed, for next morning the water in the wash basin was black with drowned ants, as also the drinking water in the glass beside my bed. When my deacon came early in the morning to let out his fowls from their pen underneath the hut he found them all dead; they had been killed by the ants as they

PANAMA PADRE

could not escape, yet I had peacefully slept on undisturbed.

At Frijoles the Panama Railroad Company had given us an old car and tool shed in which to hold services. Whitewashed and with platform and seats installed it served us well until some years later the whole village had to be dismantled and removed to make way for the creation of Gatun Lake. We then built a new church to take its place three miles away on higher ground near the relocated line.

I soon had the task of conducting a forest burial which took place at Frijoles. John Macdonald, or Father Mac as he was affectionately known, lived a beautiful Christian life which would put to shame many in the home lands; I had had the joy of receiving him into church fellowship soon after my arrival on the Isthmus. He had been spending a day in the bush helping a friend cultivate his plot of ground when one of our tropical downpours occurred. Both took shelter under a thatched roof; however, there were no sides to protect them. According to his friend's statement, Father Mac spent the whole time while sheltering there in pleading with him to abandon the sinful life that he was living and to yield himself to Jesus Christ. As the rain did not cease, they left the shelter and made for home; in returning through the pelting rain both were soaked, Father Mac catching a chill. When I arrived in the village next day to conduct a service, I visited his bedside and saw that he was dying. After prayer and reading I left him; two days later he was at rest and the following day I returned to bury him. The conductor kindly stopped the train close to the church for me to alight; the place was already crowded with Jamaicans and natives, for Father Mac was held in great respect by all. After the service in the church we had a journey of half a mile into the heart of the forest. Those who wore boots rode as we had to go through marsh and swamp, but the great majority were bare-legged, including those who carried the home-made coffin. A pony was provided for me, but it had neither saddle nor bridle, only a piece of cord tied around its mouth with which to guide it and a sack on which I was to sit.

It was a strange procession, but who could forget the closing scene? Above were the giant trees laden with creepers and round the clearing was the dense undergrowth in all its glory. The numerous dark and upturned faces were illuminated by the setting sun. We sang the old familiar hymns and, after the words "dust to dust, ashes to ashes", the coffin was lowered into the shallow grave with cords taken from the ponies' necks; the benediction was pronounced and the grave filled in. A few boughs were quickly cut down from overhanging branches and a fence was made around the grave to keep off animals. A mourner cut a cross in the bark of the nearest tree to mark the spot, another placed a branch of evergreen at the head of the grave and we scattered, not to see our friend again "until the day break and the shadows flee away".

In those days no provision was made for the mentally inflicted; instead they were removed to the common prison for safe keeping. I have often heard an old negro deacon of one of my churches tell how he became light-headed following a severe attack of fever and was consequently removed to the jail at Colon. On his recovery he experienced difficulty in obtaining his discharge and was made to earn his keep by being marched out with some of his companions under police escort to remove the bodies of any who had died during the night. For this purpose they were provided with coffins from the jail which, after being taken to the cemetery, were emptied and returned. He added that when the coffin did not fit the corpse, the corpse was made to fit the coffin. I will refrain from describing the gruesome method.

Apart from in the cities of Colon and Panama there were no post offices in those early days; if one wanted stamps one had to buy them from the postman on the train. When a mail steamer arrived at either port, letters for the line were sorted on the train and were handed to the Station Agent or policeman at each place where the train stopped. The person's name to which the letter was addressed was then called out and if the letter was not claimed it was taken with others to the cuartel (police station) where all were placed in an old soap box which was nailed outside. Passers-by would go through them taking any that they chose to claim, so that by the time the remainder reached their rightful owners the envelopes were pretty grubby. Should I be going to or returning from one of my other churches, when the train was carrying mail from a steamer newly arrived, I would often walk into the sorting car and ask the postman if he had any letters for me. He usually replied, "If you look through that bundle", pointing to some mail, "you may find some". I did and, having obtained that which I sought, returned to the passenger carriage to enjoy reading my letters

PANAMA PADRE

from home. Sometimes in the letters that I wrote I would tease my parents, my sense of humour coming to the fore.

As the Colombian police wanted to reoccupy their old cuartel at Culebra in which I was living, the French authorities offered me the use of half a small house at Rio Grande attractively situated on a little hill all by itself, a mile from the cuartel and about the same distance from the church. Though the bush immediately around the house had been cleared, the dense tropical jungle still hedged it in. At the rear lay the deep gorge of the Rio Grande and it was a delight while working at my desk to listen to the roar of the water as it fell in cascades and tumbled on the rocks below.

To move my possessions I called for volunteers to carry my few pieces of furniture, books and other belongings. Between twenty and thirty men responded; everything was carried on their heads and the problem of removal was thus easily solved without cost. Some of the women voluntarily scrubbed the part of the house that I was to occupy. I also made another change by installing a black man in the place of my old cook as this had the advantage that he could look after my horse as well as undertake the housework. As the house was surrounded by bush, snakes of all kinds were plentiful and I frequently killed them, whether large or small. One that was killed near the house measured 7 feet 3 inches in length and 14 inches in circumference; while two caymans (a species of small alligator) were shot in the lagoon nearby. Seeing two iguanas lying on the branch of a tree close to my veranda, I persuaded a man to come and shoot them; both fell at the first shot. So armed with machetes, we plunged into the bush. We failed to find the body of the male in the dense undergrowth, but I found the female mortally wounded and skinned her; she had about one hundred eggs inside and measured 3 feet 10 inches from head to tail. Many are much larger; I had one that measured over 3 feet. Although harmless, iguanas are rather fierce looking reptiles having a serrated crest down the back and a pouch under the chin.

One day I crossed the Chagres River to visit a native woman who was dying of tuberculosis. The family was living in a native hut, if it could be called a hut at all for it had no sides. The roof was thatched with palm leaves, under the eaves of which, on a bamboo floor laid across the rafters and reached by means of a central notched pole, the family slept. Although as poor as the proverbial church mouse, the family wanted to show its appreciation of my visit, so begged me to partake of some iguana eggs that were being cooked for the family's own consumption. Not wishing to hurt anyone's feelings I tasted one; it was not unlike the yoke of a hard boiled chicken's egg. In the poorer districts of Panama City strings of these eggs, often almost black with flies, can be seen hung up for sale; perhaps the less said the better.

My first baptismal service was held in the Rio Grande Lagoon just three months after my arrival. There were more than thirty applicants for baptism but we had a strict rule that all candidates must attend instruction classes and, even then, were only accepted after the most careful enquiries and examination, so that only about half the number of applicants were finally accepted on this occasion for baptism. On the previous day the site had been chosen and two large booths made of bush poles and palm branches were constructed, one for the men and the other for the women, in which to change afterwards, with a small booth for my personal use. As one of the deacons entered the water to mark the spot selected with a small stick, a cayman measuring about five feet in length rose and swam off. There was no cause for alarm for it was not big enough to be dangerous and no larger ones were known to be in the lagoon.

From before dawn on the Sunday morning people began to arrive, some had even walked long distances through the night; it was estimated that there were about 1500 present. The candidates were all dressed in white, the men wearing white suits and the women white dresses with white turbans around their heads. As for myself, disregarding all convention for the sake of convenience, I made it a practice always to wear my cricket flannels when baptising. It was an inspiration to hear that gathering sing some of the old well-known hymns, while the sound of the Rio Grande as it fell in cascades over the rocks only added charm to the music. After a prayer, Scripture reading and a short address, I baptised each candidate in the Lagoon on confession of his or her faith. Another hymn, the benediction and the large gathering scattered, but the memory of that service will not soon fade away.

Chapter 3

UNDER COLOMBIAN RULE

Sunday was pay day for the French Canal employees, thus greatly interfering with all Christian work; it had become the great marketing day of the week when the natives brought in their fowls, eggs, vegetables and fruit to sell. The Chinese and other shops, and particularly the saloons, did a thriving business while the money was plentiful and the going good. Added to this there was an occasional merry-go-round with other side shows that provided entertainment. On these occasions drinking and gambling were two of the greatest curses. Conditions reminded one more of the mining camps in the Wild West, the drinking often ending in free fights and the drawing of knives. I have seen white men in the saloons, four at a table, each with a pile of gold in front of him and his loaded revolver at his right hand ready for instant use in a dispute.

Then there was the Panama Lottery, the greatest gambling concern of all, which employed a small army of people including the maimed and the halt. They squatted on the pavements, in doorways, at street corners and at the railroad stations, all doing a flourishing trade in selling lottery tickets; it was said that one-tenth of the proceeds went to support the Roman Catholic church. The principal offices of the lottery were located on the ground floor of the Bishop's Palace with frontage facing the Cathedral Plaza and not more than a stone's throw from the Cathedral itself. Willis J Abbot, in his book "The Panama Canal", page 277, states:

"The Bishop still plays a notable part in the life of the town, for it is to his palace in the Cathedral Plaza that you repair Sunday mornings to hear the lucky number announced. This curious partnership between the church and the great gambling game does not seem to shock or even perplex the Panamanians, and as the State turns over to the Church a very considerable percentage of the lottery profits it is perhaps only fair of the Bishop to be thus hospitable."

It may be of interest to some to know that of the few cases of winning the Grand Lottery prize that came to my notice, no good but only disaster came. Let me mention two instances. The first is that of a Jamaican whom I knew and who won US\$3000; he at once celebrated the event by buying a keg of rum with which he entertained his friends to free drinks. He also presented his wife with a considerable amount of jewellery. On returning to his work a day or two later, his foreman, who quite probably indulged in an occasional gamble or two, said to him, "James, I hear that you have been the lucky winner of the Grand Prize". James: "Yes, Boss". Foreman: "Well, James, I guess you are too big for this job now, you had better go to the time-keeper and get your time and seek another job". As James lost his work, he and his wife decided to return to Jamaica and there buy a pen (a small farm or holding) and a donkey and cart and go in for market gardening. They then bought first class saloon tickets on the liner (something almost unknown to the ordinary coloured passenger who usually travels 'deck') and had cabin labels stuck upon their few pieces of baggage, thus returning to their native land in style as became the winners of the Grand Prize. Nearly a year elapsed during which I heard no more about them. Then one day when riding along the railroad track I saw approaching a negro whom I felt sure I knew; he was barefooted and wearing a ragged pair of trousers and an old shirt. I looked hard at him and then said, "Why James, what are you doing here? Where is your wife and what has become of all the money you won?" James looked rather sheepish and then replied, "I

PANAMA PADRE

have come back to the Isthmus to get work. The pen turned out to be a failure; we lost all the money that we had and as I could not afford to bring my wife back with me, I left her in Jamaica till I can earn enough to send for her". "Yes, James," I said, "You will remember that I told you at the time that no blessing would come out of it". He looked ashamed and turned his face away. We then had a serious talk which I hope proved useful.

The other case that I would mention is that of an Englishman who won the US\$3000 prize and was congratulated by all his friends. A day or two later we met, whereupon I said to him, "You are not expecting me to congratulate you, are you?" He gave me a rather amused smile and said, "No!" At this I said to him very much the same as I had said to James, telling him of the tragedies that I had known and the curse of money so gained. He was earning good money, but drink was his undoing. He decided to send his wife home taking with her the money that he had won, also his accumulated savings for investment in England. Then, some weeks later, when he had wound up his affairs he took the steamer and followed her, only to find that she had sailed, that very morning he arrived, for South Africa with another man; so both wife and savings were gone. A wise man of old once said, "But the foolishness of fools is their folly."



The Panama Lottery office and Bishop's Palace, Panama City.

But not all patrons of the Lottery won prizes, the evidence overwhelmingly proving the contrary. I recall the case of a Jamaican negro whom I was asked to go and visit as he was sick; he lived in a little one-room hut far back in the bush. On entering his tiny cabin I expressed my regret at finding him unwell and said, "I understand that you wished to see me!" He replied that he wanted to return to Jamaica and asked me to assist him by providing him with money for his passage. This was not the first time that I had been

PANAMA PADRE

asked to do this and in more than one deserving case I had been able to comply, though Jamaica was nearly six hundred miles away. But as I looked around that poverty-stricken hut with its walls literally papered with Lottery tickets, hundreds of them, and representing some scores of pounds I said to him, "Are all these tickets yours?" He answered, "Yes!" At this I asked, "Did you ever win anything?" He replied, "No!" Whereupon I said to him, "Do you know that if you had saved all the money represented by these tickets you would not only have more than enough to pay your steamer ticket back to Jamaica, but you would have quite a good sum left over with which to settle down, and spend, when you get there?" I continued by saying to him, "Now that Mr. Douque (the owner of the Lottery concession) has got your money, why don't you ask him to assist you by paying your steamer passage money instead of applying to me?" He at once said that it would be no use asking him. "Yes," I said, "And you can waste your money by spending all you have on purchasing these useless Lottery tickets, but as soon as you are ill or in trouble you at once expect the Christian church, which you have neglected, to come to your help". After a further talk I gave him some temporary assistance but could not see my way to assist him to return to his island home.

Cock fighting was regularly practised as was bull fighting occasionally. These so-called sports usually took place in the cities of Colon and Panama on a Sunday as on that day they could command a larger audience. It was commonly said that some priests would send their fighting cocks to the cock-pit while they themselves would go and conduct mass and as soon as it was over they would repair to the cock-pit to bet on their own birds.

As to bull fights, I recall how on one occasion, but at a later date, an ambitious showman thought to provide a novel change by advertising a fight between a tiger (the name by which the native jaguars were known) and a bull. There was a great demand for tickets for which people willingly paid a fancy price. The day came and the expectant audience waited in breathless suspense for the release of the jaguar from its cage that they might see it spring upon the poor bull. At last the cage door was opened but the jaguar, no doubt over-awed by the large crowd of spectators, refused to come out. According to the newspaper report it was prodded, crackers were exploded near it and a pistol fired over it, but all in vain; it would not move. The showman lost his show and greatly to his chagrin was compelled to refund the gate-money to his audience. In its wild state the jaguar frequently preys both on cows and horses, so that at one time the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica was glad to pay a generous reward for every jaguar pelt.

It was not an uncommon thing to see both cows and bulls tied by their horns to the tail of a horse and thus dragged to the slaughter-house; many a horse had its tail dislocated by this cruel practice. Native women would be seen riding astride to the market with half-a-dozen, or more, fowls all tied together by their legs in a bunch on either side of the horse and hanging downwards. Such was the lack of even an elementary understanding of kindness to animals.

Christmas Eve, which we associate with all that is sacred and beautiful in connection with the birth of our Saviour, was given over to revelry, drunkenness and debauchery. The noise at night was simply deafening as those who possessed a gun (and most people did, either for self protection or for hunting) let it off and kept on doing so far into the night until their supply of ammunition was exhausted. For my own people things soon became very different, services being arranged for Christmas Day in all our church buildings. Covering a distance of often twenty miles I would conduct services in four or five different places, the first service usually being held at 5 a.m., then later at another church at 6, another at 11, and so on; allowing myself just enough time to make the journey from one town or village to another throughout the day. Usually I also took advantage of Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter and Whitsunday to hold some of our largest baptismal services of the year, and these always drew large congregations.

The week preceding Lent was given up to carousing and licentiousness by a great part of the native and West Indian population. Liberties were taken and neither persons nor possessions were safe for those who ventured out after dark; people were accosted in the streets and often robbed and negroes and natives, masquerading in the streets, some dressed as clowns and wearing masks, would even embrace passers-by. Traffic was suspended and the police would turn a blind eye to much that was going on, many offences

PANAMA PADRE

including drunkenness being ignored. Then suddenly with the dawn of Lent the city once more became serious and sober; the women, children and old men flocked to church to attend mass. On Good Friday, all dressed in black, they would line the pavements while a coffin containing an image supposed to represent Jesus Christ was carried through the streets and all those of the Roman Catholic faith would either cross themselves or kneel on the pavement as the priests carrying their burden went by. On Easter Sunday there was another procession of quite a different kind, when hundreds of children, all dressed in white and about to make their first communion, would parade through the streets accompanied by a large number of priests, nuns, acolytes and others. At night, amidst a great display of fireworks, bonfires and the blowing of toy trumpets, an effigy of Judas Iscariot, stuffed with fire crackers, was publicly burned in the Cathedral Plaza while the people shouted with glee and brass bands provided the music. I think the people were more to be pitied than blamed for many had never been taught otherwise.

In the cities of Colon and Panama there were some good stores run by Panamanians, Chinese and Jews, but in the towns and villages situated along the line the Chinese had almost a complete monopoly. We had no stable currency, the exchange rate varying from day to day because the United States gold currency was accepted as the standard. One day US\$5 would require 12½ Colombian silver dollars in exchange, the next day fourteen. Those were the days when our five cents circulation having been exhausted, small dirty little canvas bags filled with tobacco were the common article of exchange. These were redeemable at any Chinese store when making a purchase; needless to say no worse system for the conveying of germs and filth from pocket to pocket could hardly have been invented. Another method of exchange was the use of small scraps of wood or cardboard with Chinese characters thereon; these were always accepted and recognised anywhere as bona fide currency.

Everything used to be held by monopoly, from the grave lots in Panama Cemetery to the hairdressing business on the line. It was even illegal for one man to cut the hair of a friend and accept a fee for it, for the right to sublet the privilege belonged to he who had paid the biggest price to the government. The sale of tobacco, the privilege to sell drugs and many other similar trades and professions were controlled in the same way.

The judges of those days received a salary of only \$30 Colombian currency per month, and yet their position and that of their secretaries was always looked upon as a lucrative one to be sought after by the aspirants of such offices. The amount reaped in fines over and above the amount recorded and turned over to the Treasury must have been sufficiently substantial to induce such gentlemen to leave their ordinary callings in life to accept the appointments. How much some of them knew about jurisprudence, or whether they had ever heard of it, might be an interesting question. It used to be said that whoever arrived at the courthouse first won the case; though sometimes both accuser and accused were made to pay, the former usually escaping with the lighter fine. The poor prisoner who was so unfortunate as not to be able to pay was frequently detained in the stocks where his friends were allowed the privilege of seeing him; such stocks were in most of the prisons. For food he had to depend largely on the charity of his friends; if he had no friends to help him he would have to be satisfied with the dime or two allowed him. Escorted by an armed guard, he would be allowed to go out to a store to buy his piece of bread or whatever else he could afford to purchase out of his meagre allowance.

On hearing two shots one Saturday at midnight, I enquired next morning what they were about. I was told that a man in one of the camps at Lirio had shot another while in the act of stealing a fowl from his coop; I then asked, "What did the judge say?" To this the response was that the judge told the man who had killed the other that he must bury the dead man for his trouble. One day whilst I was travelling by train we stopped at Tabernilla where the local judge came into the first class carriage to speak to the policeman who was in the carriage. All that the judge wore was a pair of old trousers fastened by a belt and a print cotton shirt hanging down outside his trousers instead of being tucked in. As the first class carriage was full of American ladies and children in transit across the Isthmus from one steamer to another, his attire was novel if not embarrassing.

PANAMA PADRE

It was when the Colombian government was so pressed for funds for carrying on the campaign against the revolutionists that a tax was placed on the killing of every fowl and pig even for one's personal use, to say nothing of doubling the postage rate on all domestic letters. Hence, when any one wanted to kill a pig at Frijoles he would await the approach of a heavy freight train as it thundered through the village whereupon he would cut the poor pig's throat, the noise of the train effectively drowning the animal's cries and so avoiding payment to the district judge. The tax for the killing of a fowl was eight cents.

The leading newspaper in Panama was The Star and Herald (La Estrella de Panama), published daily in three languages: English, French and Spanish; its distribution was sometimes somewhat unorthodox. There was a single-span iron bridge which crossed the Canal just south of Gold Hill and Contractor's Hill and which linked the villages of Cucuracha and Rio Grande, and over which passenger trains passed. As the early morning train crossed over the bridge, copies of The Star and Herald were thrown out of the mail van to the French foreman and others supervising the work of excavation in the Canal bed below.

Weddings were great events and usually the occasion for a good deal of display and dressing up on the part of the coloured people. The bride was generally dressed in white silk or satin with a veil and long flowing train, the end of which was carried by a small bridesmaid. The men invariably wore frock coats and silk hats with white kid gloves which were always put on the wrong hands and in reverse so that they tried to button them down the middle of the back instead of under the palm. Sometimes, if the bride's white shoes pinched her feet, she not being accustomed to wearing shoes, the best man would go down on his knees in the church and, without removing his white kid gloves, take off the bride's shoes; the bride standing in her stockinged feet through the ceremony. At the close the best man would again go on his knees and replace the bride's shoes. Nobody seemed to think anything about it, just accepting it as part of the programme. But this grand display often had a less desirable side which involved getting into debt. While one could not prevent some expenditure, it was very important to do all one could to encourage marriage because the alternative usually meant living together out of wedlock; hence, I tried to do everything to persuade couples to have simple weddings. I used to tell the people that if they would only come in their ordinary Sunday clothes I would take no fee, but if they were going to spend money freely at the tailor's and dressmaker's they could pay the minister too. After the ceremony in the church, no wedding feast was complete without the minister returning to the house and cutting the cake simultaneously with the bride. As the cake was usually composed of several layers it was a matter of competition as to who could cut through to the bottom first. This was not quite fair as the minister having frequently to do this naturally had the advantage over the bride.

In our Culebra burying ground there was a Chinaman who lived among the graves; for a shelter he had nothing but a few old rusty sheets of corrugated iron forming a lean-to which gave a little protection from the weather. He seldom wore more than a pair of pants and relied on charity and the gifts of food from his fellow countrymen to keep him alive; he appeared to be both deaf and dumb as whenever I or others spoke to him we could never get a sound out of him. On more than one occasion, after the United States government took over the building of the Canal, the Sanitary Department removed him and his lean-to from the cemetery providing him with better accommodation just outside. But it was all to no purpose, for as soon as he was left he removed himself and his belongings back again to the same spot amongst the graves. American doctors examined him and pronounced him physically fit apart from his apparently being deaf and dumb. What induced him to make his home there no one appears to know; it was said that he had lived there for more than half a century. For years I visited him every time I went to the graveyard to conduct a funeral service and that was pretty often.

Another interesting character of the days of the French Canal was a native woman who was to be seen frequently on the Las Cascadas station platform, usually, I am sorry to say, the worse for drink. She used to come in some miles from the bush and nearly always brought with her a nugget of gold. This she would sell to one of the several Chinese storekeepers for what she could get, probably far below its real value; she would then remain in the town till all had been squandered on drink. She was frequently followed

PANAMA PADRE

by both white and coloured men in their endeavour to wrest from her her secret of the whereabouts of her gold supply, but she proved herself far too clever for them and invariably threw them off the scent. As far as I know her secret was never found; what ultimately became of her I cannot say, but she ceased to make her appearance on the line.

The impression made upon the coloured people by the news of Queen Victoria's death in 1901 was remarkable. Everywhere there was universal grief, for she was held by all in the greatest esteem. To her they attributed their emancipation from slavery, though actually the Act of Parliament conferring freedom was passed four years before the Queen came to the throne. As, however, the Act did not come into full effect until one year after her coronation, in 1839, the people firmly believed that they owed their freedom to her. Though 63 years had elapsed since then, I was asked by several coloured people, some even with tears in their eyes, "Now that Mrs Queen was dead would they be put back into slavery?" When I assured them that there was no such danger their relief was immense. On account of the time difference between east and west (Greenwich and Panama) we knew by a special edition of the newspapers in circulation at 3 p.m. on the 22nd January 1901 that the Queen had died that same day at 5 p.m. Guns were fired in both Colon and Panama and all ships in both harbours flew their flags at half-mast. The churches were draped in black as a tribute to one who for over sixty years had held the love and esteem of her subjects in many lands

Chapter 4

ADVENTURES IN THE SADDLE

Having left my horse in the care of one of my people during a trip to Jamaica early in 1901, I returned to the Isthmus to find that he had been allowed to wander on to the railroad line and had been killed by a train. To me it was a real loss as a horse in those early days was a necessity in my work. However, I learned of a fine young bay horse for sale that was quite superior to the usual underfed and overworked Isthmian pony; I purchased him though he was not yet properly broken in, and so I had the novel experience of cooling him down myself. I taught him to gallop and to jump; at first he tried to throw me, but if he could stick it, so could I. He would suddenly take the bit in his mouth and tear into the bush, whereupon I often had to lie down on his neck to escape the over-hanging branches; when reined in he only backed, reared or otherwise gave trouble. So, having duties one day many miles down the line, I determined that I would tire him out. At first he tore into the bush; I let him go, and then quietly brought him back again to the railway line. Again and again he repeatedly bolted into the bush and each time I made him return to the line where I made him gallop over the sleepers, for if anything will take it out of a horse, cantering along the railroad track under a blazing tropical sun will. Having at last ridden some fifteen miles mostly on the railroad track, I reached my destination and attended to my business. I then turned my horse's head for home; this time through the bush along river beds and the bed of the Canal, passing a great deal of machinery at which he would only have shied before. By the time that we reached home, after completing some twenty-five miles, he was thoroughly tired out and, with but one exception which I propose now to relate, gave me no more trouble.

As our Culebra church building had become too small for our growing congregations we bought an old wooden house, pulled it down and used the material for enlarging the church. This was all done by free labour, women and children helping to transport the boards by carrying them on their heads while the men, with hammers and saws, built the extension under my direction. I had from twelve to fifteen men working daily for over a week, representing over one hundred days of labour freely given without cost to the church; the men at the same time losing the pay that they would have earned on the Canal. However, to regress, on the appointed day for the commencement of work on the extension of the building, I was ill with my first attack of malaria fever which laid me low for six days. I was still too poorly either to walk or stand, but I had not the heart to disappoint the people who were already gathering to give their services and who were depending on my guidance and instruction. So with the help of my man I dressed and, when he had brought my horse, I got on to the saddle with the aid of a chair as I was too weak to mount without it. My horse, however, had been enjoying a week's holiday with plenty of corn and he soon discovered that I was too weak to control him, so, taking advantage of my helplessness, he deliberately threw me off. For the trip to the church he had to be led while someone else supported me on the saddle. Arriving at the church I was lifted off and helped on to a chair where I remained for about two hours directing the men till, being exhausted, I was only too glad to return home to bed.

"Old Boy", for that was the name to which my horse responded, and I became the best of friends and when loose he would come at once in response to my whistle. We had many interesting adventures together, let me relate just a few.

I was making the rather long journey in the saddle from Culebra to Gatun, a distance of some 30

PANAMA PADRE

miles, and was riding on the old railroad track, then a single line. Just beyond Ahorca Lagarto the track rounded a bend and went through a mangrove swamp with tall swamp grass on both sides. Suddenly I became conscious of the approach of a train that I could not see because of the tall swamp grass which completely hid it from view. Being slightly downgrade steam had been shut off and the vibration of the track was almost the first indication of its approach. Instantly I tried to ride my horse off the track and down the embankment into the swamp but he refused to go having too much intelligence for that. It was all happening so suddenly that there was not a moment to be lost; so, springing off his back, by sheer force I pushed him into the swamp whereupon that which I expected happened, instantly he began to sink. I jumped in just after him and throwing one arm around his neck kept his head above water, meanwhile supporting myself by treading down the long swamp grass. A second later a long American freight train drawn by two powerful locomotives thundered past. From both locomotives the driver and fireman craned their necks out of their cabs to see a horse's head and my own head and shoulders sticking up just above the surface of the swamp.

As I knew, to get my horse into the swamp was one thing, but to get him out was quite another. I spoke to him and he responded by making two or three splendid efforts to get out, but all in vain as he only sank deeper in the mud. For a moment it looked as though I must lose my friend of so many adventures, but not without another try. When riding on the Isthmus we used to dispense with everything that it was possible to do without, hence I never used more than one girth and no crupper over the tail. Using both hands I managed to release the one girth and remove the already submerged saddle, pushing it upside down, with my feet, as nearly as possible to just where his forefeet were. With a prayer to God that the attempt might be successful, I made him try again. This time his forefeet came down upon the inside of his saddle, which for a moment acted as a springboard, and with a mighty plunge he succeeded in climbing out. Then with my foot I had to fish for my lost saddle and extricate it. I hardly know which was the stranger sight, my horse or I, for we were both covered with swamp mud; though soaked to the skin, within ten minutes under the burning tropical sun, both horse and I were quite dry, but caked with mud. With a heart grateful to God I resumed my journey.

Another venture with Old Boy also occurred on the railway; on this occasion I was returning home in the dark after taking a night service in Matachin (Spanish for dead Chinaman). It was just as I was rounding the sharp bend near Bas Obispo (Spanish for Low Bishop), with rather more than five miles to go to reach home, that once more I became aware of the approach of a train. It was customary for heavy freight trains from Panama to have the assistance of an additional locomotive as far as Culebra; on reaching the summit the extra locomotive would automatically uncouple and speed ahead as far as Matachin where it would take a siding so as to allow the freight train to pass it. Being downgrade here steam was usually shut off so that the approach of the train was not easily heard; while, on account of the bend round the hill where I was riding, it was impossible to see the headlight of the locomotive. What was to be done? It was not a matter of minutes but of seconds. On my right hand there was the towering hillside with little more than three feet to spare between the rail and the hill. On the other side there was about the same distance between the other rail and the side of the gorge at the bottom of which, twenty feet below, was the rocky bed of the Bas Obispo River; for the single track on which I was riding was built on a ledge cut out of the hillside. It took far less time to act than to write this; my choice was between the track and the hill or between the track and the gorge. If the gorge, and my horse were to take one step away from the approaching train, he would fall to his death; whereas if I kept him on the side of the hill there was the danger of his fouling the locomotive if he moved. I decided to risk the hillside, so springing off my saddle I pushed Old Boy as close against the hill as I could. With my back to the oncoming locomotive and one hand firmly gripping both bridle reins, I made him face the direction of the approaching locomotive as I quietly spoke to him and stroked his head with my free hand. A moment later the headlight of the first locomotive suddenly loomed round the bend of the hill and the locomotive flew past; Old Boy gave one great shudder, but otherwise did not move. I do not think that there was more than a spare inch between the axle of the locomotive and him.

PANAMA PADRE

But it was not all over; I knew that the second locomotive with its long freight train was not far behind, so I waited and continued to talk to him and to stroke his head. Once again another headlight suddenly appeared around the bend of the hill; a second later both locomotive and freight train thundered past and once more my horse shivered but stood his ground. Had I placed him against the hill with his back towards the approaching locomotive instead of his head, thus placing him between myself and the oncoming train, in a moment of fright, not seeing but knowing what was approaching, he might have sprung forward knocking me down in front of the train as well as being struck himself. By making him face the train, had he backed from it he would probably have been killed, but would not have knocked me down; however, he did much better than that, he trusted his master and kept still. We were able to continue our journey in the dark. It must be remembered, as previously stated, that in those early days there were no roads outside the cities of Colon and Panama on which to ride other than jungle trails. Even the packhorses that regularly carried supplies for the Chinese shops which were scattered in the towns and villages along the line made use of the railroad track as a road.



French canal cutting, Bas Obispo.

When first I arrived at Culebra the railroad station stood half way towards Rio Grande and on the very edge of the French Canal, for the line passed through Rio Grande village before crossing the Canal on

PANAMA PADRE

its way to Cucuracha (Spanish for cockroach); later the station was twice removed and rebuilt on other sites. It was while riding past the old station on my horse one day that, without any warning, a premature dynamite explosion from the Canal bed below took place. Instantly a shower of stones including some pretty large ones fell around my horse and self sending up showers of mud and splashing both of us all over as the stones fell in some of the mud puddles close to the track, other than this we both escaped unharmed; it was little short of a miracle.

There were other adventures that we had together; as when, after a service, cantering home one night in the dark to the Mission House, we (my horse and self) were suddenly called upon by some soldiers concealed in the undergrowth by the side of the bush trail to halt. To reach the house it was necessary to cross over a small moat about four to five feet wide and about the same depth. This moat was spanned by a narrow bridge consisting of a couple of planks together not more than two feet in width; so, rather than ride Old Boy over, I had trained him to approach it at a canter and take the moat at a jump. But unknown to me, while I was at the service, a picket of Colombian soldiers had been concealed in the bush by the side of the trail on the look-out for revolutionists. So, on returning home, just as my horse was gaining speed in the semi-darkness to jump the moat, suddenly voices called out to me in Spanish to halt. Obediently I tried to rein in my horse, but it was quite useless; he had been trained to take the moat at a jump and jump he did. Next morning I received a polite warning from the Colonel in charge of the picket of soldiers that if I did not halt when next challenged the soldiers would be compelled to fire; I received a similar message from the alcalde (local judge). What both failed to understand was that my horse did not know Spanish and so could hardly be expected to obey. As stopping my horse became a nightly occurrence, I soon found that by answering, "Inglese padre" I was allowed to pass. My black man did not fare so well for he was not only stopped when by himself, but also searched at the point of a bayonet and the second time with the trigger of a gun on cock. Others were not only searched but robbed.

Missionary work was not always plain sailing; often difficulties were encountered when making journeys to spread the word, as when I had set out from Culebra on my horse to take a service at Matachin. On reaching Bas Obispo I found to my cost that the River Chagres was in flood and had caused the Obispo River, which flowed into it, to rise so considerably that I had to persuade a native to swim my horse across it while I, carrying his saddle, went over the railroad bridge. The bridges were constructed with just two strong iron girders on which the railroad ties rested with the rails being fixed to the ties; hence, though easy to cross on foot, despite the open spaces between each tie, it was not possible to take one's horse over. After taking the service it was evident that a violent storm was approaching, so I hastened back to Culebra. Already small brooks that on my outward journey did little more than wet my horse's hoofs were now raging torrents, while the Obispo River was swollen to double its size and depth. Though I employed another native to take my horse into the water, it proved quite unnecessary as the faithful animal, having already swum the river on the outward journey, needed neither instructions nor assistance and swam the 100 yards, landing on the opposite bank just at the right place. Then the storm broke in all its fury; I had to take shelter in a Chinaman's store for about an hour till the rain slackened and I was able to proceed on my journey. Abandoning the railroad track I proceeded this time by bush trails which involved crossing three or four small rivers and making use of the Canal bed before I reached home.

Another difficult trip, particularly so when made at night and dependant on one's lantern or the occasional assistance of the moon, was the crossing of the Canal bed when making the journey to or from Cucuracha or Paraiso for the taking of a service. This involved leading or riding one's horse, usually through deep mud, both down and up the steep embankments. These embankments often had deep fissures, sometimes several feet in width and many feet in depth, that were caused by the continuous mud slides and which had to be circumnavigated where they were impossible to cross; my horse became wonderfully sure-footed and showed considerable skill in picking his way, but for this he might often have broken a leg.

On the north side of Matachin there was a small railroad bridge of typical construction which spanned a stream that, after a heavy downpour, often became a raging torrent. To avoid having to unload

PANAMA PADRE

their packhorses, the traders had placed double boards, with a total width of not more than 20 inches, over the ties as the space between the ties was entirely open; across the bridge, on these boards, they led their animals. This particular bridge was about 30 feet in length, about 15 feet above the rivulet which ran beneath, and had no sides; the ties simply rested on and were secured to the heavy timbers of the bridge, and on the ties were the rails. When walking over the bridge, it would be quite easy to fall between the ties into the stream below. What the packhorse drivers could do with their loaded beasts, Old Boy and I thought nothing of doing when I was mounted on him, not only on this bridge, but on any on which boards had been laid. However, in a climate like that of Panama, boards easily become rotten. Riding over this particular bridge one day Old Boy put a foot through a rotten board between two sleepers. I pulled in the reins and at the same time spoke to him; he did not attempt to move, but stood motionless on three legs while I quickly slipped off the saddle and stood on the ties. Gently I lifted out his foot and led him over the rest of the bridge. Henceforth I took no more risks and either made him ford the rivers or streams or, if that was not possible, swam him across instead. Once again, on that railway bridge, Old Boy showed his usual superior intelligence.

On a narrow trail, one day, in the jungle, with dense undergrowth on either side of myself and my horse and some overhanging branches above, I heard a sudden thump behind just as I had passed beneath an overhanging branch; swinging round in my saddle I saw a good size snake, about 5 feet in length and thicker than my arm in girth, that had dropped from the branch beneath which I had just ridden. Not the least bit disturbed I immediately asked myself what the snake was after, certainly it was not aiming at myself for he would not have waited till my horse had passed. Then I remembered that my horse had frightened a large lizard, about twelve inches in length and the size of a rat that had bolted across the path in front of us and darted into the undergrowth on the left hand side. The snake, from its place of observation on the branch, had seen the lizard, but waited for us to pass before dropping to the ground and moving swiftly into the undergrowth in pursuit of the lizard. There is usually a good explanation for the behaviour of animals, for, unless attacked or injured, most try to escape from man.

When riding along our narrow cobbled street in Culebra one day some soldiers who were just in front of me started running and firing at the same time. They were trying to catch some natives, who had come in from the bush to sell their goods, that they might conscript them for the army. I believe that the men were successful in making their escape but it was a miracle that the wild shooting caused no casualties in the narrow twisting street or in the wooden houses flanking it. It was the old press-gang method of England of a century earlier.

It was while riding on the east bank of the Canal one day that I heard a shot and, looking across the Canal cutting in the direction from which it had come, I saw a soldier on the opposite bank on one knee with his rifle directly pointed towards me and having apparently aimed at me; he was one of a company of soldiers stationed not more than from 300 to 400 yards away. As I was mounted I think that he must have mistaken me for a revolutionist; I saw him reload but as I quietly rode on making no attempt to escape, the firing was not repeated. We used to say that as long as the Colombian soldiers aimed at us, we were reasonably safe, but it was when they aimed in some other direction that we were in danger of being hit. At close range the consequences might, of course, be otherwise, as when one night an important and respected government official at Bohio heard his fowls cackling and went out to see what was the matter; he was instantly shot dead at close range by some soldiers who were helping themselves to some of his fowls to provide themselves with some chicken broth for their dinner next day.

Chapter 5

THE RAILROAD

During the first seven years of the gold rush in California some 250,000 people annually crossed the Isthmus on mule trains and some US\$50 million worth of gold was carried. Hence it was that the discovery of gold in California led to the construction of the Panama Railroad. John Lloyd Stephens (author of "Incidents of Travel in Central America") secured the concession from Colombia for 49 years for the railroad and construction commenced in May 1850. Midnight on 27th January 1855 saw completion of this formidable task and on 28th January the first locomotive passed from ocean to ocean on a road of 47 miles. In 1867 Colombia granted an extension of 99 years to the concession on a down payment of US\$1 million and an annual fee of US\$250,000.

It took just four years and eight months to build the 47 miles of track; construction cost US\$8 million (£1,600,000) while the gross earnings of the railroad just four years after the laying of the first rail amounted to US\$8,146,605 (£1,629,321). At that time the Panama Railroad Company was charging passengers US\$25 (£5) for transit across the Isthmus while personal baggage was 10 cents (5d) per pound which made the Railroad one of the most profitable in the world, ("History of The Panama Railroad" by Otis, 1861). In those early days it was cheaper for the Chinese storekeepers to bring all their goods, from large boxes of saltfish to kerosene oil, from Panama City to Rio Grande, Culebra and Empire on the backs of poor winded packhorses rather than pay the freight on the railroad. At the railroad bridges they had to unload and carry their goods over, swimming their beasts of burden across the river below. On account of this same dangerous rivalry to trade, the Panama Railroad Company, from time to time, used to dump great boulders on the narrow trails leading down to the water's edge by the bridge-side. I have seen railroad employees close the trail by securely fencing the railroad with barbed wire because by law the Railroad Company had the monopoly of carrying all freight and passengers across the Isthmus, but it was not long before the barbed wire was torn down again and the packhorses resumed the use of their trails. Twice daily the train crossed the Isthmus. It was, in my early days, made up mainly of freight cars with one first class carriage for whites and a second class carriage for negroes, although the latter could always travel in the first class carriage if they liked to pay the difference.

It was during the construction of the Panama Railroad that the extensive Monkey Hill Cemetery came into use, this was in about 1853. Up to and including the time of the French in Panama a funeral train was run almost daily to Monkey Hill; this was made the occasion by many of the local people for obtaining a free "joy-ride".

To the Panama Railroad Company I was greatly indebted for many courtesies and much help. For the whole of my nineteen years on the Isthmus the Company furnished me with a free first class pass with unlimited travel between the Atlantic and the Pacific. During my ministry on the Isthmus I made many hundreds of journeys on both the old and later the new railroad lines in the interests of our churches. When I received my first pass I went to thank the Superintendent of the Company; "Mr Loveridge", he said, "we do not look for thanks. We do not give you this pass as an act of charity, but as a business proposition. Each employee that you turn out a sober and better man on Monday morning because he has been to your church on Sunday and each man that you encourage to get married and to settle down and to have a home of his own, instead of wondering from place to place, is to our advantage and so it pays us to help you".

PANAMA PADRE

Horses and cows, and not infrequently men, were killed almost daily on the line by trains. JS Gilbert refers to this in his poem, "The Saint's Rest", when he states:

"I killed when running on the road
I'm sure full fifty men."

Quite a few times I have been on the train when this has happened. There was an old saying that the whistle was blown for a horse or a cow on the track, but not for a man; I need hardly say that this was a calumny on the locomotive driver.

Accidents did sometimes occur on the old Panama Railroad especially when the engineers were double tracking the line. On several occasions I was on the train when the locomotive became derailed and had to be lifted back on the rails again without the passengers interrupting their journey. The American locomotives were large and heavy, but they all carried a pair of very ingenious iron shoes. These would be placed just in front of the wheels that had left the track; the locomotive would be started and usually after two or three attempts would remount the rails and we would proceed on our journey. It was quite the custom to climb out of the carriage down on to the line there to watch the efforts of the driver and fireman to get their locomotive back onto the track. On one occasion I was in the rear carriage of the train when the coupling parted. Blissfully the locomotive, baggage car and first carriage continued on their way while our carriage travelled slower and slower as, uncoupled, we dropped behind. At last, ahead, the absence of our carriage was discovered and the locomotive and front portion of the train returned to meet us, chains were used to couple our carriage and, once more together, we went ahead.

During my early days on the Isthmus the railroad consisted of a single line, but at Mamei there was a siding that one train would enter to allow another to pass. When the two trains came to a standstill the baggage cars were always drawn up with their sliding doors opposite one another, thus enabling the conductors of the respective trains to exchange greetings and information. The interest of this lies in the fact that at Panama there was a mongrel dog that daily made a practice of accompanying the conductor whose duty it was to take out the morning train. No ticket collector ever disputed the dog's right to pass the barrier at Panama station for it enjoyed an unofficial place on the staff of the Railroad Company. On entering the station the dog would at once make for the baggage car of the outgoing train and travel across the Isthmus as far as Mamei. As soon as the train from Colon arrived the dog would jump the three or four feet from one baggage car to the other, returning to Panama station on the other train. On reaching its destination it would accompany the conductor to his hotel where it was always given a meal. The dog would then accompany the same conductor, or another, back to the station and embark on the outgoing afternoon train, travelling again as far as Mamei, where it would repeat the same performance of transferring from one train to the other and returning to Panama. On arrival at Panama station it would again accompany the conductor, whoever had been on duty, to his hotel where he would be provided with his evening meal. For years this dog made the same journey twice a day, never making the mistake of going beyond Mamei and always returning home to Panama City.

It was a Sunday morning and the conductor had kindly stopped the train for me at Frijoles to enable me to alight to conduct a service there. I at once made my way to the little native house of my deacon, Henry Clarke, the scene of the nocturnal visit of the driver ants, as there was still more than an hour before the service. I had not been there long before my day school teacher from Tabernilla, three miles away, arrived accompanied by a young woman who had also come for the service. After a conversation about the progress of his school, the teacher quite casually remarked that his companion had nearly fallen into a hole in the track between the ties but he had been able to save her just in time. "A hole in the track?" I asked, "There should be no hole in the track". How far up the line is it?" "Not many hundreds of yards", he replied. So telling him and another man to accompany me, I set out at once to investigate. It took but a glance to explain everything; the line had been built on an artificial embankment some 15 to 20 feet high and on both sides

PANAMA PADRE

was swamp connected by a small tunnel hardly big enough to allow a man to crawl through. Owing to the heavy rains of the previous week the swamp water on one side was so swollen that the tunnel was insufficient in size to allow it through, consequently the water had created a new channel for itself by breaking through the embankment on both sides of, and above, the existing tunnel, thus creating a large cavity, in which half-a-dozen men could stand upright, and completely undermining the track. So when the young woman had stepped on the thin crust of earth between two of the ties, it at once gave way revealing the cavity beneath. Fortunately the train on which I had been travelling had uncoupled two cars packed with 100 soldiers at San Pablo, barely five miles away, but for this one hardly cares to think of the disaster that might have happened. It was the last carriage on the train, the one in which I had been sitting, which had apparently dislodged the embankment as it passed over. As we had no telephone communications at Frijoles I immediately despatched the two men, sending them in opposite directions, with instructions to stop any train that they should meet and warn the driver and, as they were both coloured men, they could place the responsibility for doing so on myself. The one had a distance of 3 miles to go and the other 3½ miles; at each place they were to notify the track foreman stating that nothing but a breakdown train with its gang of men could cope with the situation. In a short while, from both directions, pump cars arrived with foremen and about twenty men with picks, shovels and extra ties, the men only to find that, as my two messengers had already stated, the job was much bigger than they could handle; hence, valuable time was lost while one of the pump cars returned to its depot, three miles away, in order that the repair depot at Colon, 20 miles away, could be telephoned. This resulted in the despatch of the breakdown train with some 60 men who undergirded the track with large timber beams to support the ties so that after some six hours trains were again able to pass. Some weeks later, whilst I was travelling on a train, the Supervisor of Tracks came and sat down beside me and jokingly said, "I have sometimes wondered why the Company gives you parsons free passes over the road, but we got our own back the other day; that was a good turn you did us reporting that break in the track". I found all these men very friendly and ready for a chat.

It was not far from the same spot where the break had occurred that, on hearing the noise of an approaching freight train drawn by two powerful American locomotives, I saw a large sow with her litter of nine or ten small pigs feeding on the track. Familiar with trains the mother instantly tried to induce her offspring to leave the track and descend the embankment by setting the example herself, but all her frantic efforts were in vain; the young pigs would not leave the tempting morsel, whatever it was, that they were enjoying. It was but a matter of seconds before the leading locomotive was upon them. The sow, realising that all her attempts to persuade her family to move were useless, in her despair rushed up the track towards the oncoming train and deliberately charged the locomotive. It was a pathetic instance of mother-love and mother-instinct, though her sacrifice was in vain. Needless to say she and her litter, with the exception of two, were all cut to pieces and hurled into the swamp and bamboo thickets on either side of the track.

One evening, after I had been conducting a week-night service at Frijoles, I was, through the courtesy of the American Train Despatcher, holding an order for the freight train to stop and pick me up. The train was not due till about 11 p.m. but, on account of some repairs being carried out on a bridge, the train did not reach Frijoles till 1 a.m. After signalling by means of a lantern to the driver to stop I climbed into the caboose (guard's van) and took my seat beside the conductor (guard) in his look-out cabin on the roof. It was about an hour later that, as we were running through a low-lying swampy district with a miasma mist so dense that visibility was only a few yards and as we sat chatting, suddenly penetrating through the dense mist I saw the big headlight of the second section (a second train run just behind the first) within five yards of telescoping us. Instantly I exclaimed to the conductor, "The second section is almost upon us!" With astonishing speed he dropped down the steps from his look-out cabin on to the tail-board of the caboose and waved his lantern and at the same time shouted for all he was worth in trying to warn the oncoming locomotive. A moment later his shouts were answered by a whistle from the foremost locomotive of the second freight train and the train with its two locomotives slowed down; it was a near miss.

But mishaps did not always end as happily as these, for ten minutes after the train in which I was

PANAMA PADRE

travelling to Colon had passed a certain junction, there was a head-on collision at the junction between two of the largest American locomotives, one being pitched down the embankment into a swamp where it lay partly submerged. A cow on the line was the cause of a derailment of the locomotive of a labour train just as it was passing over a bridge; the locomotive fell into the river below, both the driver and fireman were drowned. Such accidents could hardly be avoided as the track was not fenced in, and during the period of rerouting the track, which was in the path of the Canal, engineers were busy reconstructing and double tracking the line.

Hearing a tremendous crash one day on the east side of the Canal, I stepped out onto my veranda just in time to see two spoil trains piling into a great heap together. On making enquiries I learnt that a heavily laden spoil train loaded with earth and rock from the Canal was travelling on a line towards its dump when, from the dump, a train of empty cars was returning on the same track. As both negro drivers claimed the right of way, rather than give in, both blew their whistles and turning on full steam each jumped from his locomotive. No one was hurt but the result was that both locomotives and all hopper cars were wrecked; it was a childish action. By the instructions of the French Canal Company both drivers were immediately arrested and thrown into prison, a well-merited punishment.

Through the kindness of Charlie Northorpe, the Train Despatcher at Colon, I was often picked up or dropped from a freight or passenger train at some wayside station where the train was not scheduled to stop. It was while sitting in the Ticket Office at Matachin talking to Charlie's brother that the following incident occurred. The two passenger trains, north-bound and south-bound, had both stopped at the station, disembarked and embarked their passengers and proceeded on their respective journeys; as these were the days of the single line one train had stopped in a siding in order to allow the other to pass. Matachin being on this occasion the passing point. As Agent, Mr Northorpe had been outside delivering something to one of the trains and, returning, resumed his seat, both trains having left. All of a sudden I noticed his face turn ghastly white as he sprung from his seat and said, "I have let no. 4 train leave and no. 3 has not yet arrived". I did my utmost to reassure him that it was not so, that both trains had been in the station together and had indeed left in opposite directions. It took a long time before I could convince him that all was right; having been pre-occupied with the north-bound train he had failed to observe the presence of the other train.

A novel way of travelling was when, having visited a friend who was Superintendent of the Railroad Machine Shops at La Boca, I was anxious to catch a particular train from Panama to Culebra. My friend gave orders for me to be taken from La Boca to Panama station and I made the journey riding on the cow catcher as this was much cooler than riding on the footplate in the cab of the locomotive. During a visit to the Mission House at Culebra by a fellow minister, he expressed a desire to see something of the construction of the Canal; accordingly we crossed the Canal bed to reach the east bank and were making our way along the railroad track when a locomotive pushing a large freight car approached us. When a freight car was pushed by a locomotive instead of being pulled, it was often an indication that the freight car was loaded with dynamite and was being pushed so that any hot cinders falling from the funnel would not fall on the roof of the freight car. The conductor, who was riding on the roof of the car, recognised me and called out to know if we would like a lift; as anything was better than tramping along under the heat of the scorching sun, I shouted, "Yes!" But my companion, when he saw the large red labels stating "Dynamite" posted on the car, was of a different mind and said, "You are never going to ride on that car, are you; supposing it blows up?" I am afraid that my answer was a little irreverent, for I replied, "Well, you will be that much nearer heaven to start". The conductor meanwhile having signalled to the locomotive driver to stop, we clambered up the tall iron ladder to the roof of the freight car and, from this point of vantage, continued our journey along the bank of the Canal.

Many years later, in May 1918, we had one of the worst railway disasters in the history of the Panama Railroad. This involved a train comprising one carriage in which were 35 Canal Zone convicts with five Police Officers all of whom were returning to Gamboa Penitentiary from road building, four other carriages carrying passengers and two refrigerator cars next to the locomotive. The second refrigerator car

PANAMA PADRE

left the rails and, turning completely upside down, wrecked the five carriages which were following. Three people were killed and 46 injured. The carriage in which the convicts were travelling suffered the most; the Deputy Warden told me that of the 35 convicts only two escaped without some slight injury, all five Police Officers in the carriage with the convicts were badly injured, one fatally. Other passengers also suffered. One of the convicts in the first carriage was a big burly negro from the United States; he was in prison for the murder of a woman with whom he had been living, it had been a particularly dastardly crime but, as the old Colombian law was in force at the time, he had pleaded guilty and could not, hence, be sentenced to death, only to imprisonment for life. He immediately engaged in rescue work, releasing several passengers who had been pinned beneath the wreckage; for this heroic work the Governor pardoned him and he was returned to the United States.

PANAMA PADRE

Chapter 6

THE MISSION HOUSE

While grateful to the New French Canal Company for providing me with accommodation, it was important that at the earliest opportunity I should be able to erect my own mission house. So, just six months after my arrival on the Isthmus, accompanied by a couple of my church members armed with machetes, we cut a path through the bush to the summit of a small hill, known as Silver Hill, overlooking the Canal. On clearing a considerable part of the bush I was able to see that the site would make an excellent one for the erection of both the mission house and a church. From its altitude a magnificent view could be obtained of the surrounding country which was as lovely and picturesque as could be found anywhere. Looking south through the Culebra Cut the buildings of Ancon, Panama, ten miles away, could be seen; while looking north one could see just as far in the direction of Colon. Below lay the native village of Culebra and the extensive works and cutting of the Canal. To complete the view, as far as the eye could see, were numerous hills, the beauty and grandeur of which had to be seen to be appreciated and admired. The site belonged to the Panama Railroad Company which granted me a lease at a nominal charge with the right to erect both a mission house and a church.

I called for free labour and soon had over a score of men with picks and shovels clearing and levelling the ground, while the women, not to be outdone, carried the stones for a big retaining wall that was to separate the proposed buildings. This activity involved many weeks of hard work but was supplemented by the employment of paid labour. At Colon I purchased 5,000 feet of lumber and, through the kindness of the General Superintendent of the Railroad, only paid one third of the usual freight rates to take it up the line.

I returned home on the freight train with the lumber, on arrival at Culebra the flat car was shunted into the siding and I soon summoned my congregation who entered into the spirit of unloading the car and carrying all the timber from the railroad station to the summit of Silver Hill. No time was lost in persuading men to do the work. Though claiming to be carpenters many of these men knew little or nothing of the craft; their tools consisted of a hammer, saw and plane which they could only use indifferently, most of them not having even a chisel to their name. One had to be constantly watching them, lending them tools and even showing them how to use the tools. The difficulty came when one was obliged to leave them for a few hours to attend to some other important engagement and one returned to find a window frame in the wrong place or a doorway that was not plumb; these things happened all the time. In spite of these little and often annoying delays, the work of constructing the walls and framing the roof made good progress.

As the house went up the coloured people, not appreciating the value of plenty of fresh air and ventilation in their own homes, so requisite in a tropical climate, remarked that it must be an Englishman's house because it was all doors and windows. The house was planned to meet my immediate needs with provision for enlargement at a later date as funds permitted. Without waiting for the hanging of doors and windows I took possession and moved my belongings in as it was much easier to superintend the carrying on of work by being on the spot and thus saving the time occupied in making the journey backwards and forwards from the house at Rio Grande where I had been living. The roof, like those of all other buildings at the time, was made of corrugated iron and, as for some months funds did not permit the erection of ceilings in any of the rooms, one can imagine the noise caused every time there was a tropical downpour of rain.

On Sunday 7th July 1901 a dedication service was held when several speakers gave addresses and

PANAMA PADRE

the Mission House was formally set apart for the purpose for which it had been built. Little did I then dream that on another Sunday afternoon just over four months later it would receive a christening of a very different kind when, during fighting in the vicinity, the house would repeatedly be hit by bullets.

Work went ahead apace on the clearing of the bush and undergrowth around the Mission House as well as on preparing the site for the proposed new church. For this purpose, and also to allow for a paddock for my horse, I enclosed most of the summit of the hill. From the trees felled some hundreds of poles were cut for making a fence on which to run barbed wire, not only to keep my horse in, but also to keep other people's horses and pigs out, as they were accustomed to wander everywhere at will to pick up their living. These poles were cut from branches in lengths of about five feet and usually measured from four to five inches in diameter. They were then sharpened at one end and driven into the ground, when in a short time, if the termites (white ants) did not attack them first, they took root and grew, sending out shoots and in time becoming trees themselves. To these poles, placed at defined intervals, we fixed the strands of barbed wire; to obtain the wire I had to send a man with a horse to Panama City, ten miles away, the horse bringing back two rolls at a time, each roll weighing one hundred-weight. Prior to fencing in the land, in the early morning light, I saw wild deer feeding within a stone's throw of my veranda and on one occasion, while I was away engaged in pastoral visitation, a drove of peccaries (wild boars) appeared on the Mission Hill causing my black man to take refuge in the branches of a tree till they were gone.



Moss Loveridge on "Old Boy" in front of the Mission House at Culebra.

PANAMA PADRE

Eighteen months later, having received a small grant for the purpose, I purchased another car load of lumber for the Mission House. I had had to follow the old adage of cutting one's coat to fit one's cloth and, for this reason, had only been able to build three of the five rooms originally planned; now I hoped to be able to complete the house. With its customary courtesy the Panama Railroad Company granted me reduced rates for transporting the timber; on the previous occasion I had hired dock labourers at Colon to undertake the loading but the cost had been so considerable that I resolved this time to make use of some of my own people. Five members of my Matachin church volunteered to help, to do this they left Matachin by moonlight in a dug-out canoe at 1 a.m., travelling down the Chagres River and reaching Colon at 8 a.m., whereupon we commenced work. The loading of the car was finished by 5.30 p.m. whereupon they left on their toilsome upstream journey of nearly forty miles; they had given their labour whilst I had paid for their food. On my return to Culebra other volunteers unloaded the car and carried the lumber up the hill.

As the French Canal Company had been laying off a large number of its labourers and some 50% of the people had left the district in search of work elsewhere I had difficulty this time in obtaining carpenters, so I set to work myself with the help of a couple of workmen to construct the two planned additional rooms.

Imagine my surprise one day, a public holiday, when early in the morning my friend Mr James Macfarlane, Marine Superintendent at La Boca, quite unexpectedly arrived bringing with him half-a-dozen of his own carpenters who at once commenced work so that by the end of the day considerable progress had been made.

From the time of my first arrival on the Isthmus Mr Macfarlane always proved himself a good friend to me, both he and Mrs Macfarlane showing me much kindness in their La Boca home.

The house was surrounded by a veranda on three sides and was planned to include two bedrooms, a living room and my study. All the windows had Venetian shutters, but no glass, with the result that by the morning one could wring the water out of the muslin curtains, while any salt cellar, half full of salt and left on the table overnight, would absorb so much moisture from the atmosphere that by the morning the upper half would be full of water if not actually overflowing on to the table-cloth. Outside, connected by the veranda but otherwise detached, was the kitchen with a servant's room adjoining. A bathroom was later constructed at the far side of the house on a portion of the veranda that was enclosed for the purpose. Little by little, as funds allowed, other improvements were added until, in October 1905, the Mission House was finally completed.

With JH Payne I could say, "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home".

It was while the Mission House was in the process of being constructed and still unceiled, the casing of the walls not being complete to the top, that one night I was awakened by a violent scratching in the partition as of some animal climbing up between the boards. As the noise was much too loud for an ordinary rat my curiosity was aroused, so I quietly got up, lit a lamp and waited. Presently my patience was more than rewarded by the appearance of a tree porcupine in search of food; I resolved to catch it, but how? Its sharp quills were not nice things to encounter. With the aid of a table, a chair and a box I climbed up to the open part of the partition to await the next appearance of my new friend, but every time he sighted me he disappeared again between the double casing where I could not possibly reach him. Lighting another lantern, for it was 3 a.m., and taking with me a hammer and nails, I went under the house and with some boards nailed up the open space above the sill and between the uprights where he had entered, leaving open only a little outlet. Next I lit a fire on the ground beneath the sill so that the ascending smoke would enter the aperture and drive the porcupine out. The effort succeeded beyond my expectations; putting on an old pair of gloves and with a sack in my hand, as the porcupine appeared, I suddenly threw the sack over him and as quickly transferred him to the box that I had ready, but not before both sacking and gloves had many small quills sticking in them. Porcupines, like hedgehogs, expand their quills in self defence, driving them into the object of attack at the same time. Once in captivity it was not many days before the porcupine became so docile that I could safely stroke its back without any attempt on its part to drive its quills into my hand; in fact it became so tame that I used to leave its cage door open and it would go out into the bush and return to its cage to be fed. This happy arrangement continued for some months till, I think that it must have

PANAMA PADRE

been the mating season, it went out and forgot to return.

A buzzard story is not out of place here. I had had given to me a turkey hen which hatched out a dozen young ones; at first they all thrived well till one day there was one missing, the next day another, and so on day by day the number decreased. I could not account for it. I carefully examined the fowl house in which they were shut at night, but there was no trace of rat, snake or opossum hole by which admittance could be gained, neither had I any reason to think that the ocelots or other wild cats had been stealing them by day. From twelve the number was gradually reduced to five, then four, then three, then two, till only one sturdy survivor was left. What was the cause and who was the thief? One day the sturdy sole youngster turned up at the house alone and piteously crying as though to attract attention. I went out to investigate whilst the young turkey followed me as though understanding that I was seeking its mother. Twice I went round the paddock looking in every likely place, but all in vain. Then I suddenly thought of a well that I had sunk in the paddock, in the hope of finding water, but which proved to be a failure and was abandoned at a depth of 20 feet as only surface water collected in it. I looked down the well and there sure enough was the turkey hen and also a buzzard as big as the turkey, both swimming in the water. I soon realised what had happened; this same buzzard had been coming down daily for its midday meal each time carrying off one of the young straggling turkeys while the mother would be protecting the rest of her offspring beneath her wings. But coming to the last youngster the turkey and buzzard fought near the well till both fell in. It was but the work of a few minutes to fetch a long ladder and to descend it in order to bring up the turkey. Though dripping wet I shall not soon forget the way she ran to her baby and her baby to her. Next I again descended the well for a much more formidable task, that of capturing and bringing up the buzzard. I first seized it by the neck so as to make it impossible for it to tear me with its powerful beak and with the other hand I grasped its two legs; how I ever ascended the ladder without releasing my prey I hardly know, it took a long time. Reaching the top I carried my captive to the house and, with the help of my man and a pair of pliers, secured an iron ring around one of its legs to which I attached a dog chain which was fixed to a ring in the wall. I fed the buzzard with scraps of meat and all went well for a few days till one morning to my surprise I found the buzzard gone. On examining the spring catch on the end of the chain I found that the spring itself had been twisted out of place by the buzzard's powerful beak thus enabling it to make its escape.

Another rather unusual story which has a connection with the Mission House concerns a crocodile (commonly called alligator in Panama) that from snout to tail measured 17 feet. Having heard that it had been killed after badly mauling a Spaniard who had been bathing in the Rio Grande, near Corunda Bridge, Panama City, I sent a horse and two men to bring back its skull and hide. The latter I placed on my veranda and, with a wooden box inside it, it had all the appearance of being stuffed and it provided a seat for three to four people. However, one day strange sounds were heard proceeding from within the crocodile hide. On investigation a small family of kittens was discovered in the box; a cat had found an opening beneath the hide into which she had crept and there given birth to her family. I doubt very much if, in the history of the world, kittens were ever before born inside a crocodile's skin. Even the story of Samson finding honey in the lion's carcase pales before this. "Out of the eater came forth meat and out of the strong came forth sweetness".

There were scorpions that could be troublesome on occasions for I was stung by them at least three times. They always turned up in the most unlikely places, sometimes in one's linen cupboard, as when one night I took out a pair of clean pyjamas to wear and, next morning on taking my bath, was astonished to find a large scorpion clamped on my leg in its own gore. It had been concealed in my pyjamas and I must have lain upon it squeezing the life out of it before it had time to sting. On another occasion I was not so fortunate; having been busy and feeling very tired, for we begin the day's work very early in the tropics, I tried to snatch a few minutes of sleep in my deck chair in the heat of the middle of the day. Suddenly I awoke conscious that I had been badly stung in the back of the neck. Some hours later a patch appeared nearly as big as the palm of my hand, green like gorgonzola cheese and surrounded by a red inflamed

PANAMA PADRE

border; a scorpion falling from a rafter had stung me and for several days I had a very enlarged and painful neck till the skin peeled off in the process of healing. Another time I was stung on the finger when in the act of closing a door, the scorpion being concealed in a crevice. The third time that I was stung the scorpion was hidden in the loose wrapper of a brown paper parcel.

Snakes were plentiful on the Mission Hill both in size and variety, poisonous and non-poisonous, and I not infrequently killed one under the house itself which had been built on piles. Many of these snakes I used to preserve in spirits in bottles, but the larger ones I usually skinned. Having just killed a big black snake, measuring 8 feet 4 inches, that had come with the intention of invading my fowl house and helping itself to some of my chickens, I decided to preserve it by putting it in an unusually large demijohn, of the type used by the natives for holding rum, but in which I used to keep my drinking water. After a good deal of coaxing and squeezing I managed to push the dead snake down the large neck of the demijohn and coil it within. I added between three and four gallons of spirits but, as this proved insufficient to fill the demijohn, for the sake of economy I unwisely filled the remaining part with water, securely replacing the bung and sealing it with wax to make it air-tight. I then proudly placed the demijohn on the top of a tall bookcase with other bottled snakes. It was some two or three weeks later at 4 a.m. that I was suddenly aroused from sleep by a crash of glass in my adjoining study followed immediately by an obnoxious smell. Springing up I stuck a light and very cautiously entered my study to find the demijohn blown to a thousand pieces and the snake, the worse for decomposition, hanging from the top of the bookcase down to the floor. What had happened was easy to understand. Due to my having watered down the spirits decomposition had commenced and gases had formed, the pressure of which ultimately forced the demijohn to explode. But it is in the sequel to the story that the interest lies, for as soon as it was dawn I removed the dead snake to the farthest corner of my paddock where I threw it on to the barbed wire fence and thought little more about it. However, a couple of hours later my attention was drawn to quite a large number of buzzards, the scavengers of the tropics, of which the wonderful power of smell had attracted them to the decomposed snake which they had greedily devoured. But, it being soaked in alcohol, the effect was soon evident. Some of the buzzards were vainly trying to balance themselves on the tops of the fence poles, their great spreading wings fluttering up and down as they tried to avoid falling; clearly they were intoxicated. I need say no more, the story provides its own moral.

Chapter 7

REVOLUTION

The revolution of 1899 - 1902, known as the three year war, cost Colombia some 50,000 lives according to official records; it was a conflict between two political parties, the liberals and the conservatives. For more than fifteen years the ruling party in Colombia, at this time Panama was only a Department of Colombia, was the Conservative party, or Clerical party as it was often called. When an election took place armed soldiers with fixed bayonets were present at the polling booths and before a voter left, his voting slip was scrutinised; if he had voted for the existing government, well and good, but if against he would be marched off then and there to the Chirique prison where he would be detained indefinitely as a political prisoner without trial. No wonder that the government in power was usually able to record 100% support and re-election.

As to the Liberal party, I cannot do better than quote from Bienowshki's "Canal Zone Pilot", page 208:-

"The Liberal party at this period is said to have constituted about seventy per cent of the entire population, exclusive of the uncivilised Indians. Many years before, when in power, this party had incurred the enmity of the Church by expelling the Jesuits and confiscating church property for the use of state and education. Since then, to check the party's growth and to stamp out liberal tendencies, it is alleged that the offices of the Church were frequently used. Many are said to have been excommunicated; the marriage service and rights of burial refused, and their children denied admission to the schools. Furthermore they were not entitled to the privilege of the courts, and often awoke in the morning to find their property confiscated and an order of arrest confronting them. They were permitted no representation in local or federal offices, nor in Congress, with the notable exception of General Rafael Uribe-Urbe, a man of uncommon intelligence and a natural born leader whose personal following was too strong to be easily thrust aside."

Hence it was that the only chance of recovering their rights was for those disaffected to retire to the interior of the country, gather together in small bands and secure weapons wherever obtainable. When strong enough they would make surprise attacks on government outposts and, later, on the towns and cities themselves.

Only a few weeks before my arrival on the Isthmus, the liberal attack, led by General Herrera, on the city of Panama took place; it began at Corozal, only three miles from Panama, and was well planned. After the first clash the government troops fell back on the city itself, fighting taking place along the railroad where the Balboa track and the mainline meet near the Caledonia Bridge. The engagement lasted for 72 hours during which time the city became a shambles; snipers swept the streets with their bullets and the wounded and dead lay everywhere. I shall not soon forget, on my arrival in Panama, seeing the numerous bullet holes in the fabric of both Corozal station and the little wooden signal box that then stood on Caledonia Bridge, the station building was so riddled with bullet holes that it looked just like a sieve. On every hand was to be seen evidence of the grim struggle; with the desire to avoid unnecessary bloodshed General Herrera demanded, through the foreign Consuls, that the city should capitulate. Two days were lost in these negotiations during which the government forces strengthened their defences against attack, while

PANAMA PADRE

much of the foreign population took refuge on board the British cruiser "Leander", then lying in Panama Bay. From a humanitarian point of view, General Herera's action deserves commendation, but from a military aspect it cost him the advantage of the initiative which had been his. Over 800 of the combatants had fallen, and for nearly four days many of the bodies were left unburied as a feast for the buzzards and to decompose beneath the burning tropical sun. To avert a pestilence, thanks to the Captain of the "Leander", British bluejackets were landed to inter the dead.

Frequently small bands of revolutionists (liberals) would turn up unexpectedly at one or other of the different towns or villages along the railway line between the two terminal cities. Then a day or two later, sometimes only a few hours after the revolutionists had gone, a couple of railroad carriages would arrive, from which a lot of government soldiers would disembark. They usually made their camp on the station platform where they would cook, eat and sleep, helping themselves to anybody's pigs, cows and fowls and foraging the Chinese stores for other food. The liberals were much more popular as they usually confined their depredations to obtaining their requirements from government sympathisers and supporters.

One night I was suddenly awakened by a rifle shot followed by a number of volleys and then silence. On enquiring next morning as to what had happened, I was told that one of the government soldiers on the station platform, hearing movements in the bush just across the railway line, called in Spanish to the offender to halt; but as the command was disregarded and the movements continued, the soldier fired. Instantly his companions, being aroused out of their sleep, seized their guns and began firing too. It produced the desired result, the movements ceased and silence reigned. On investigation next morning the riddled carcase of a poor unoffending horse that had strayed was found in the bush opposite; the brave soldiers had killed the enemy.

It was on a dark night during November 1900, as I was quietly riding home along the railroad track after taking a service and just a month after vacating my old quarters to enable them to be reoccupied by the Colombian police, that the following incident occurred. The night was still, apart from the incessant croaking of the big bull frogs that seemed to be as plentiful in the ditches and long grass as were some of their relations in the plagues of Egypt, and my man was in front of me carrying my lantern to enable me to see and jump my horse across some of the open ditches that at intervals crossed the track. Suddenly the stillness of the night was broken by the sound of "ping, ping, ping". I wondered what was happening for my man as suddenly showed a clean pair of heels and disappeared, lantern and all, leaving me to pick my way home as best I could. It was just after 9 p.m. and it struck me as rather strange that the police should be practising firing at that time of night, as the shots came from the vicinity of the old cuartel and we had no soldiers quartered in the neighbourhood at the time, but I did not take it seriously or as any cause for alarm. The firing continued on and off till 3 a.m. Next morning I learned the cause; about 35 revolutionists of the liberal party, mounted and armed, had arrived by a jungle trail, surrounded the old cuartel and attacked the police in the very building in which I had been living just a month before. A battle ensued in which five of the police were killed and a sixth mortally wounded, the rest escaped into the jungle in the darkness and were seen no more. Then, making a good haul of all the rifles and ammunition stored in the building, the revolutionists retired by the way they had come. For the next two years no policeman stationed on the line wore his uniform, but performed his duties in his civilian clothes.

Two days after this incident the government sent sixty soldiers to Culebra and they were quartered within 120 yards of my house, some of the poor people being turned out of their homes that the soldiers might occupy the buildings; in view of what had already happened, they were not quartered in the old cuartel. As there were some 600 revolutionists believed to be encamped in the bush not many miles away we anticipated trouble at any time, for what chance had sixty poorly trained and undisciplined troops against 600? Happily for us, the soldiers were later withdrawn and transferred to Panama City. These men were largely a rag-tag army with apparently very little discipline and they sadly lacked uniforms. One would have a pair of striped trousers, but no tunic; another a tunic, but only civilian trousers; while yet another would have no uniform at all apart from a military cap. Most were barefooted and they were always accompanied

PANAMA PADRE

by a few women camp followers who did their cooking and, when fighting was taking place, I have seen these women carrying rifles with belts of cartridges. I need hardly add that the local population always felt safer when the soldiers were away; nothing was safe when they were about. As already stated, they would take and kill anybody's cows to provide themselves with meat, selling whatever was left over to obtain a little ready money in place of the pay which they seldom saw. They also seized any horses that they could lay their hands on so that at one time my horse was the only one in the district not commandeered, and that only because I was an Englishman and the Protestant padre.

On Easter Sunday 1901 I had to stop the evening service on account of a riot taking place between soldiers, assisted by the police, on the one hand and civilians on the other; two men were shot, three severely batoned with considerable loss of blood and about twenty arrested. One of the primary causes of the disturbance appears to have been due to the fact that in the morning, when from 1000 to 1500 men were assembled at the offices of the Canal Company to receive their pay, a large body of armed soldiers and police came on the scene and took the walking sticks of every man away. This was done on the supposition that such articles might prove dangerous in the event of a disturbance, instead of which it proved the primary cause of provoking one. As the soldiers and police continued taking away the walking sticks from every man they met, many skirmishes resulted; I saw one of the police fire twice at a man, but happily for him he managed to escape and, though chased, succeeded in eluding his pursuers.

Daily our people and others were being stopped, searched by the soldiers and robbed. My black man, when going to the railroad station to meet me, was stopped and searched, but when later returning together, though he was carrying my bag, the soldiers neither challenged nor molested us. These poor soldiers were to be more pitied than blamed because many of them were half-famished and ill; some were mere boys torn from their homes and scarcely reaching up to the muzzles of their rifles. When we had 800 of these soldiers quartered at Culebra, they were dying at the rate of from fifteen to twenty per day. I shall never forget the sight on one Sunday morning after we had assembled for service in our old church building: the service had just begun when some of these soldiers passed by, two at a time with a pole swung across their shoulders; suspended from, and knotted over, the pole was a filthy blanket and out from the end of each blanket could be seen the dirty feet of a dead soldier being carried to his grave. Within a few minutes no less than ten bodies were thus carried by; while some of my congregation who were a little late in arriving, paid dearly for being late by being caught and compelled by the soldiers to go and dig trenches, shallow enough it is true, in which the bodies were placed. This death rate was due in no small part to semi-starvation, neglect and disease. Sometimes a poor fellow would be on sentry duty in the morning, would sicken and drop at his post and would be dead and buried within a few hours.

One day my deacon, Henry Clarke, was nearly shot by an Amazonian woman who was carrying a rifle and marching with the Colombian troops. Henry was just returning from his little plot of ground, where he had been working, and was carrying his machete, used by all the natives when cultivating in the bush, when the Amazonian met him and accused him of being one of the revolutionists that the soldiers were engaged in fighting. It was only the timely intervention of his wife, Susan, that saved Henry his life.

When we did not have the government soldiers on the line we used to have frequent nocturnal visits, as also occasionally in the day, from the revolutionists. A handful of armed and mounted men would come in, surround the house of any one known to be in sympathy with the government side and relieve him of all superfluous cash and anything else that was available and worth carrying away. They would also visit the Chinese storekeepers, who were the milch cows of both parties, and relieve them of all the provisions and other goods that the revolutionists might require, not that they had any animosity towards the Chinese, but that they knew that what they did not take the government soldiers would. Later these revolutionists became so bold that they would come out in the day time and collect taxes, sometimes only to be followed by the government party doing the same thing the following week. I have also known the revolutionists set prisoners and others to work cleaning up some of the bush and repairing some of the trails around Culebra, something that the government for a long time had neglected to do. These revolutionists were very popular

PANAMA PADRE

with the West Indians and the natives as they never oppressed them and thus won their sympathy to their cause.

One Sunday a band of revolutionists suddenly appeared at San Pablo, not more than two miles from my Tabernilla church, and looted almost everything from three of the largest Chinese stores; they emptied the tills and loaded the ponies that they had captured locally with tinned goods, pork, salt, fish and everything that they could lay their hands upon. They also appropriated some cows and pigs without the consent of the owners; all of these goods they conveyed back with them into the jungle.

In the least expected places the revolutionists continued to make appearances, sometimes in one town, sometimes in another. Whenever they found a policeman or any other government official they would carry him off into the bush. When visiting a small town one day I saw the debris resulting from a visit paid by them to the office of the local alcalde; books were all ripped up and scattered and office furniture, tables and chairs were broken and destroyed. Passenger trains were often held up on the line and searched for government employees who, when found, were removed from the train which was then allowed to proceed; I was on the train on several occasions when this happened. I also sometimes travelled on the train when it was carrying government soldiers but this was always risky as at any time the train might have been attacked. It had become very much a game of hide and seek as almost daily raids at one town or another along the line were taking place, the government usually coming off worse. Happily most of these raids were attended by little or no bloodshed due to the element of surprise. Daily more alcaldes, police and other government officials were overpowered and carried off; their offices, some of which were very primitive, with their records, being destroyed. At one time all traffic on the Chagres river by boat (large dug-out canoes) was stopped.

As a measure of protection and as an additional source of revenue the government compelled all intending passengers to obtain and show a new passport every time on departure from either of the railroad termini stations. For myself this proved rather expensive as well as causing a serious loss of time till I discovered that by producing my annual railroad pass I was allowed to proceed just as though I was an official of the Company. When the Governor of Panama crossed the Isthmus by rail he was accompanied by a large body of well armed military police, while the carriages concerned had all the blinds drawn down; fortunately for the other passengers this particular train was not molested. However, three days later both passenger trains were held up by the revolutionists and all the government officials on both trains, including the postman in the sorting car, were captured and carried off as prisoners. As my letters for home were in that sorting car I do not know whether they ever reached their destinations.

While government soldiers were busy digging trenches and throwing up earthworks only a few hundred yards from my Mission House, 175 revolutionists turned up a mile away and, unchallenged, looted a number of Chinese stores almost under the soldiers' eyes and, what is more, successfully made away with their loot. Of course it has to be remembered that the intervening bush with its dense undergrowth provides a good deal of cover and that the revolutionists usually took the precaution of cutting the few telephone wires before making a raid. When the revolutionists became more active a small squad of mounted soldiers, accompanied by half a dozen others on foot known as "Rounders", patrolled the streets of Panama every night at 9 p.m. rounding up any tardy pedestrians who unwisely remained out at that hour; these were escorted to the calaboose (common prison) where they were provided with free hospitality for the night. On the line it was different for, though we were under martial law, I continued to hold night-time services at some of my churches, often riding back afterwards from Matachin making use of the railroad track and fording rivers encouraged by the fact that most people were too scared to be out after dark so that I rarely met anyone on my night-time journeys.

Nonetheless, the political situation affected everyday life; bread became very scarce, salt was not to be had for love or money. One of my people had his cow killed by another man for no other reason than it had wandered on to his little bit of clearing which was not fenced in; on applying for redress, there being no court, this was refused so the man who killed the cow, finding that no action was taken against him, killed

PANAMA PADRE

the cows of two other people. I even received a message from the Alcalde advising me that I would be wise to vacate the Mission House in the interests of my own safety, but this I was unwilling to do. In fact the situation became such that the countries of France, Germany, Italy and the United States had warships standing by at Colon.

As I was preparing to go one night to conduct an evening service in Culebra, I received a message from one of my deacons, who was a Canal watchman, advising me not to come as there was trouble in the town; however, I felt that I ought to go and see things for myself, so I had my horse saddled and rode down. My first business was to dismiss the few friends already gathered in the church and send them to their homes. Numerous liberal soldiers were busy everywhere, one could recognise them by the red bands around their arms and also by a red ribbon around the hat. As soon as the Chinese storekeepers saw the soldiers, they bolted and barred their doors and closed their shutters; but it was all of no use for the revolutionists smashed the doors with the butts of their rifles and looted at least a score of shops from one end of town to the other. It was one of the most complete lootings that I have known. All telephone wires had been cut and two soldiers placed on guard at the door of every shop. With the assistance of lanterns and of the light of the moon, which rose at 8 p.m., they carried on their work till 10.15. From my point of vantage, my veranda on the summit of Mission Hill, I watched the long line of men with their heavily laden horses as they disappeared in the moonlight into the jungle. At 10.30 p.m. my black man and I retired to our respective quarters for the night, but it was not for long; just as the clock struck the midnight hour we were awakened by the shouts of government soldiers and the blowing of bugles accompanied by the firing of rifles and small cannon.

Somehow news of the raid had been communicated to Panama City. A special train filled with government soldiers and a few small cannon was despatched, the train travelling without lights. In considerable numbers the soldiers were disembarked at both ends of Culebra. Both shells and balls were fired and for a time the noise was not insignificant, but as there was, by this time, no enemy to be found the casualties were few. A man whom I had employed to undertake the major part in the construction of the Mission House had three shots enter his house; he was ill at the time with fever when the government soldiers broke into his house, pulled him off his bed and dragged him into the wet and mud outside with the result that he sustained a cut to the head which I dressed, upon being sent for. A poor Chinese baker from whom I often bought bread, frightened by the shouting, rushed out of his bakehouse where he was preparing the supply for the next day and was shot, his corpse being found and removed the next day; this happening at the foot of the Mission Hill not 15 yards from my fence. Following this nocturnal visit by the revolutionists the government left between 150 and 200 soldiers for our alleged protection and stationed a similar number in the town of Empire, one mile away. In the city of Panama many of the shops closed and business was suspended and at Bocas del Toro, 140 miles away, where my friends the Rev and Mrs EC Notman were stationed, there was a considerable amount of trouble.

The revolutionists did not confine their activities to the land. The small government gunboat "Darien" was cruising along the coast a little to the north of the city of Panama when the liberals captured her, placed a few officers and men aboard and sent her towards Panama where she was expected by the government. First the gunboat visited the island of Taboga, lying 12 miles off the coast from Panama. On a previous occasion the liberals had visited the island and carried off the Alcalde, the Treasurer and other government officials, so the government had since placed a small garrison of thirty soldiers on Taboga with plenty of guns and ammunition. As the "Darien" approached Taboga a boat was lowered for the purpose of communicating with the shore. The ex-captain, now a prisoner in his own ship, was compelled by his captors to write and sign a letter on government paper stating that Carlos Alban, Governor of Panama was aboard and that every government soldier and official on the island must leave immediately bringing all guns and ammunition with them as they were not safe there and they were needed in the city of Panama. As each boatload of men came alongside and climbed on board the men were disarmed and made prisoners. The "Darien" next steamed south to meet a government schooner which was bringing troops to Panama. On

PANAMA PADRE

sighting the "Darien" the schooner recognised her as a friend and allowed her to approach quite close, whereupon the liberals boarded her and took prisoner the thirty to forty soldiers that she had on board. After removing her officers, together with all arms, ammunition and money that were found on board there was no space in the "Darien" for any more soldiers, so a boarding party of revolutionists was placed in charge and the schooner was taken in tow. However, this time their plans were frustrated; the news of what had happened having reached the city of Panama from Taboga, a large gunboat was despatched which, on sighting the "Darien", fired on her. Knowing that the escapade was now over, the "Darien" cut the towline, abandoned the schooner and, relying on her own greater speed, successfully made her escape, still having on board all the government officials and soldiers from Taboga, the officers of the schooner, 100 rifles, plenty of ammunition and stores and 4000 dollars: not a bad haul. Her only loss was the half-dozen men who formed the boarding party which was left on the abandoned schooner. Those men were later conveyed as prisoners to Panama City.

So, for several years life continued against the backdrop of attempted revolution and insurrection.

Chapter 8

MEDICAL WORK

Outside the cities of Colon and Panama there were no resident doctors, with the one exception of the doctor of the French Canal Company whose duties only concerned the employees of the Company. Death or burial certificates were unknown, as also were Coroner's inquests. Hence when anyone died there was no enquiry, his friends or the police just buried him and that was the end of it.

I had attended the London Homoeopathic Hospital as a missionary student for a few months before going abroad so that I might obtain a smattering of the knowledge of medicine, not only for self-preservation but also for the purpose of first aid. When I left for Panama I took with me a supply of homoeopathic medicines, a small case of surgical instruments and a few pairs of dental forceps. It is true that a little knowledge may be a dangerous thing and that fools rush in where angels fear to tread, but when there are natives and negroes daily dying around you without ever seeing a doctor, even simple remedies are welcome and better than none so that the missionary at once has numerous calls made on him to render help wherever he can.

Ignorance even in regard to some of the simplest ailments is one of the greatest hindrances, especially when superstition is united to it as the following illustrations will reveal. In Panama we had a species of dog without a single hair on its body, only a few at the extreme tip of its tail; its skin was as bare as the back of one's hand, with the difference that it was of a bluish tint. When the natives had fever, many of them believed that by taking one of these dogs with them to bed at night the fever would be transferred to the dog and that they would wake up well; hence the name of "fever dog". Another not uncommon belief held by many of the negroes was that the alcohol contained in bottles in which snakes were preserved was an excellent medicine, and the fact that the snakes may have been in the alcohol for years only enhanced, if anything, its value. Hence, when on one occasion some coloured folk came to see me and happened to find me engaged in bottling some new specimens just acquired, instantly one exclaimed, "Oh, Minister is making his medicine", and they really believed that I was doing this.

On some occasions, when I have given medicine with the instructions that it was to be taken every two or three hours, because the patients had not felt the immediate benefit within ten or fifteen minutes, I have known them to drink at one time the whole contents of the bottle. In one case I then had to administer an emetic. The people used to come to me from far and near, often leaving their homes before dawn and tramping many miles. Many and varied were their complaints, most of which could be treated with simple remedies; there were teeth to be extracted, wounds to be dressed, broken bones to be set and cases of fever to be attended to. Sometimes I would be called in the night to visit someone dying or injured in a fight. So great was the demand that I was soon compelled to limit attendances to two mornings a week on account of the claims of other work. Even then there would be several waiting outside on my veranda before 5 a.m., the number steadily increasing as the morning advanced and, though I often started before six, it was usually dinner time or later before I finished with the last. My average attendance was one hundred a month and this continued without interruption until the United States government took over the building of the Canal, when, with the arrival of American doctors, I was only too glad to be able to give this up so as to allow more time for my other work.

The medical work was not without its humorous as well as its serious side, as when a lightly

PANAMA PADRE

coloured man from the French West Indian island of Martinique repeatedly came to see me appealing for something to enable him to sleep, as for years, he said, he had not known what it was to have a good night's rest. At first I would not give him anything till, like the gospel story of "the importunate widow and the unjust judge", he began to weary me with his oft coming; so one day I gave him a few homoeopathic drops of opium in a bottle of water to be taken a table-spoonful at a time. As he went back to his hut he told everybody he met that the Minister had given him a sleeping draught and that he was going to have a good sleep that night. I think that there must have been a certain amount of imaginary Christian science or faith healing imbibed with the dose, for that night he slept as he had not slept for years and when he woke in the morning it was to discover his back door wide open and the sunlight streaming in, for the door had been forced and his lantern and some other belongings stolen. It was the patient who had talked too freely.

On another occasion, having just removed a very troublesome molar tooth from a woman without using cocaine and therefore causing some pain, she instinctively put her hand to her face on the side from which the offending member had been taken. My black and white faced monkey which was chained to the veranda pole had been watching the whole proceedings with considerable interest and immediately put his paws to the side of his own face and started making a noise cleverly imitating what had gone before. Instantly the woman, forgetting her own pain, cried out, "Minister, stop him; Minister, stop him, he is making fun of me".

We had an epidemic of smallpox that swept through Culebra and adjoining villages, it was of a particularly virulent type and was accompanied by a very high mortality. I had seen a good deal of leprosy but for sheer loathsomeness and smell I think the smallpox beat all. Vaccine was simply not to be had and there was very little that one could do apart from seeing that the sufferers were made as comfortable as possible. I have seen as many as six young women lying on canvas cots in the same hut, their sores so loathsome that they could not bare any clothes, large banana leaves being used as a substitute to cover them.

One evening I was called to see a little girl under two years old who was desperately ill with smallpox. She was running a temperature of 105½ degrees F, but the eruption failed to come out. One could pass one's hand over her burning little body and feel the pimples like lead bullets under her skin. After waiting some hours in the hope that the medicine would reduce her temperature and that the eruption would take place, I finally decided that, as she was only getting worse rather than better, I would take the risk and try Professor Kirk's treatment of putting her in a wet pack and then wrapping her in warm blankets in the hope that she might freely perspire and the pustules come through. The wet pack succeeded beyond my best expectations, she was soon in a profuse perspiration; the eruption came through and her life was spared.

When called to visit another case of smallpox, I found sitting by the sick man's bedside a young man who had been coming to me for treatment for quite another trouble. On saying to him, "What are you doing here; do you know that if you should get this smallpox it would go hard with you?", he laughed and replied that he had already had it some years ago. I said to him, "That is no guarantee that you may not get it again". He answered with a certain amount of fatalism, "It is God's sickness and if I am to get it, I get it". I replied, "Suppose you are walking along the railroad track when you see a train approaching and hear the engine-driver blowing his whistle; if you stay on the line you'll be killed, but if you step off you won't be hurt. Now, remember I have warned you". The result; a fortnight later he died of smallpox, while the man whom he went to see survived.

One day, soon after I had retired for the night I heard singing at a wake that was being maintained in a hut where a young woman was lying dead from smallpox. I quickly dressed and went to the house. The small building including the veranda was packed with friends and relatives who had gathered, it being the custom to maintain the wake all night. I spoke to those on the veranda telling them that they were doing a very foolish thing and that, as surely as they stayed there, within a fortnight some of them would be down with the sickness. I did not stop to explain that in that small crowded hut on a tropical night with its heated atmosphere, to say nothing of the presence of the corpse, such an outcome was almost a certainty. Some left, others stayed; and within the due period of incubation several of those present became victims of the disease.

PANAMA PADRE

My prestige as a prophet went up. I believe that that was the last wake to be held; to put a stop to this harmful custom I made it known that in future I would refuse to bury anyone for whom a wake had been held. My approach had the desired effect.

The epidemic lasted several months and few, if any, of the negroes escaped. The Canal Company later set apart a building for the care of its own employees who were stricken with smallpox. Here as many as 30 to 35 cases were isolated at a time, though there were still many other cases in the town not quarantined. Daily I visited many; the proportion of fatal cases was high and I had to bury many of them. I recall one particularly bad case that I had to insist must be buried immediately, and so a few hours later in the pitch darkness, aided by a lantern, I conducted the funeral service.

Leprosy was common in the French Canal days, but as soon as the United States took over the construction of the Canal all the lepers were rounded up and sent to the newly established leper colony at Palo Seco. Even then I came across one very interesting case. Visiting a home where there were several children and the father and mother living out of wedlock, my visit bore fruit in the couple expressing a desire to be married and, better still, to enter upon a Christian life. The man was clearly suffering from a disease akin to leprosy, but which I assumed to be elephantiasis as the health authorities had been so thorough in gathering up all the cases of leprosy and sending them to the leper colony. Some months after marrying them in their own little home, early one Sunday morning, I had the joy of baptising both husband and wife and receiving them into church membership. Prior to this the man had not been out of his house for two years; so on the occasion of his baptism he made the journey both to and from church in a jitney as the condition of his feet was such that it was almost impossible for him to walk. Next day, to my surprise, I learned that the police had called for him and removed him to the Leper Colony. There I visited him and later buried him. To the best of my knowledge, as I was able to keep in touch with them for several years, neither his wife nor children showed the least sign of infection.

Several men were returning on a pump car late one night from a party where some had been imbibing more than was good for them. One of them fell off the pump car on to the railroad track and in so doing broke his leg but, not being an employee of the French Canal Company, he was not entitled to medical attention. So I received an urgent message requesting that I would go to Cucuracha, some two miles from where I lived, and assist him. To reach the village I had to cross the Canal cutting on horseback which involved descending the steep embankment of the Canal, crossing the bed of the Canal and climbing up on to the other side, but my horse was well accustomed to negotiating some of these difficult tracks. On arrival I found the man in considerable pain and suffering from a broken femur; with some improvised splints it was not difficult to set. Before leaving I cautioned him that under no circumstances was he to attempt to get up or move for some weeks as I was sailing for England in three days time and would not be able to see him again till after my return. Next morning I received another message; the man had disregarded my instructions and got up, going outside the house, so that it was no surprise that the bones had become unset. To say the least it was very annoying and the man deserved to suffer for his folly. However, one could not be too hard, so, after returning home from taking evening service, I worked late into the night making a long box, or trough, comprised of two sides and a bottom, padded with cotton wool and lined with old linen. Next I nailed tapes on either side so that when his leg was reset and placed in the box, I could securely tie it down. I visited him the next day, reset the bone and tied his leg in place. As I was leaving for England on the morrow, I warned him that if he got his leg out of place this time he would probably never walk again. On returning to Panama some months later I found him walking, the broken leg being just as good as its fellow.

I was sent for to pray for a dying baby in the same village; the child was two years old. On arrival I found a number of friends and neighbours crowded in the room where the sick child lay. Turning to the mother I said, "Before I pray I would like to ask you one or two questions. Are you still feeding the child yourself?" On her answering in the affirmative, I asked, "And what nourishment are you taking yourself?" She replied that on the advice of her neighbours she was taking stout daily to help her supply of milk. Thereupon I said to her, "Now I want you to do two things: first, give up the stout and second, wean the

PANAMA PADRE

child". I then suggested that we all should kneel down and pray for the child's recovery. On returning to the village some weeks later, I found the child well and strong and playing about outside, and the mother looking much better.

Asked to visit a poor little baby far gone in convulsions, I gave some medicine and instructed the parents as to what was best to do, but I feared that the child was already beyond human aid. Returning a couple of hours later when not expected, I found the parents holding the naked body of the baby over a scorching fire made from the child's own clothes, this being advised by some of the neighbours as an almost certain cure for infantile convulsions. Needless to say I felt very angry; happily for the child death came to its release. The same baby had a mixture of spices, nutmeg and other mysterious things wrapped in flannel and tied around its little wrists as a charm to drive the convulsions away. However, the wearing of charms and carrying of mascots as a protection against different forms of evil is something not confined to the black people but is common too in Great Britain as evinced by the nailing up of horse-shoes and similar things; so difficult is it to eradicate superstition. On another occasion I came across a man applying a red hot iron to the throat of a neighbour who had lost his speech with the object of restoring it; the man died during the operation.

I have seen some pretty bad legs, but none to equal that of an old woman who hailed from the island of Martinique. One leg was simply rotten with corruption and swollen to twice its normal size; the only hope for her appeared to lie in amputation, but she was too old. So I asked the French Canal Company's doctor as a personal favour to come and see it, which he did. As soon as he saw the leg he shook his head and said that nothing could be done and that had she been younger he might have amputated it, but at her age he would not consider it. We both left never doubting but that death would soon come to her release. We were no sooner gone than some of her neighbours who were present got busy; having gathered certain herbs and bush leaves they made hot poultices with them and applied them to the offending leg. The skin burst and an astonishing amount of corruption came away; the treatment was continued and in a few weeks the patient had quite recovered and was able to walk again.

One night I was called upon at about 2 a.m. to visit a woman who had just had a stroke. It was a very dark night with a drenching fog and the usual miasma rising from the marshes. On arrival I had water heated and with improvised hot water bottles, warm clothes and massage applied I tried to restore animation to the clammy side. For a while this was partially successful but proved unavailing, for later with a rise in temperature she passed away. One woman was brought to me with a broken jaw; the man with whom she was living had thrown her out of a window, fortunately she lived on the ground floor. She made a good recovery, as did also another woman who came to see me; this one had a terrible gash to her head, the result of a quarrel and a fight. There were also cases of broken ribs, as that of a small boy of seven who was thrown from a horse when riding bareback.

In closing this chapter and my little part in it I would like to pay tribute to the American doctors to whom, in later years after their settlement in the Canal Zone, I never had to appeal in vain. Many were the cases of sickness, often quite unconnected with the Canal work, that they treated at my request or sent to hospital and that without charge. They were an honour to the medical profession.

Chapter 9

REFLECTIONS

Was it all worth while? I have been trying to give a few pen pictures of conditions on the Isthmus as I found them during my first twelve months in Panama but, as for my presence there, was it all worth while?

Laying aside all the glamour of novelty and adventure, my first year in Panama has been one of the happiest in my life for I loved my work in spite of its many problems and difficulties, most of which only added zest rather than discouragement in facing up to my task. Many of the obstacles that I first met with had been overcome.

On 5th October 1900 I was formally appointed as Missionary of the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society to the Isthmus of Panama in the United States of Colombia. My congregations had grown, a new mission church had been opened in Matachin and the mother church in Culebra had been enlarged to twice its original size but was still too small to accommodate needs; in addition my Mission House had been built and occupied. But above all the spiritual side of the work had grown, many having been baptised and received into church fellowship and the confidence and trust of the people won. It had all been well worthwhile and much more; one has to experience it to know the joy of it. At least I have thought so when returning home wet through with perspiration after taking a service with the temperature between 90 and 100 degrees F in the shade and my collar more like a soaked handkerchief than a starched article. I usually had to change my shirt and underwear during each Sunday and, when possible, would plunge into a second bath to cool off just before proceeding to my evening service.

I conducted three or four services every Sunday, often in as many different places scattered over a distance of 20 miles, taking my lunch with me when I left home, which was often before seven in the morning, and more often than not having no time in which to eat it till returning on the train in the late afternoon or just before the evening service. I learned to love the free life in the saddle, the freedom from the conventionality which is so often characteristic of the work at home in Great Britain, and the knowledge that I was not preaching the gospel on soil already ploughed. To be a missionary one has to be a "jack of all trades" and not afraid of dirtying one's clothes or of hard work. One has to have some knowledge of carpentry, the experience of a builder, the sagacity of a lawyer and the patience and paternal wisdom of a father. There are domestic strifes to be straightened out, quarrels between neighbours to be settled, visits to the sick to be made and weddings and funerals to be conducted; in short the missionary has to be at the beck and call of everybody and withal keep an unruffled temper no matter what happens.

My duties having taken me to Colon one evening, I was stepping out of the train there at about 6 p.m. when a coloured man came up to me and said, "Please Sir, Minister Jacobs (Wesleyan) has sent me to ask you if you will be good enough to go and conduct a wedding for him, the couple having been waiting in the church since 3 o'clock and he is suffering from an attack of fever and is feeling too poorly to marry them". So I told him that I would, but that I must first go to the hotel where I would be spending the night to have a wash and leave my bag, after which I would go straight to the church. On arrival at the Methodist church I found it packed with some 300 coloured people inside and about as many more outside who could not get in. As the front pew was full with several coloured gentlemen in frock coats and white kid gloves, to say nothing of ladies in silk dresses, I immediately started the service as everybody had already been waiting for several hours. After the usual opening hymn, prayer and reading of the appropriate Scriptures, I

PANAMA PADRE

beckoned to those in the front pew to stand, which they all did. Then after reading the admonition, "Therefore it is fit that we bear in mind the divine origin and authority of marriage ...", I asked the immaculately dressed gentleman in front of me who was wearing a white flower in his button-hole to repeat after me, "I do solemnly declare that I know not of any impediment why I (so and so) may not be joined in matrimony to ..." when he interrupted me with, "Please Sir, the bride and bridegroom got tired of waiting, so they have gone to get some light refreshment but will soon be back again". That took the wind completely out of my sails, had it been in my own church it could not have happened for I would have known the parties whom I was marrying, but here, under like circumstances with so many fashionably dressed people in the front pew, anyone else would probably have made the same mistake; so I just sat down to wait patiently. It was not long, however, before the bride and bridegroom reappeared; whereupon I rose and, without repeating the admonition, continued the service just where I had left off. The ceremony ended, the newly wedded followed by their numerous invited and uninvited guests left the church, while I, in the words of William Shakespeare, could thankfully say, "All's well that ends well".

It was quite a customary thing at this time for me to be asked to conduct funerals for Roman Catholics as, on account of the revolution and fear of the liberals who were known as the anti-clerical party, few priests showed themselves on the line but confined their activities to the cities of Colon and Panama. As most of the priests were either Spanish or French speaking I usually made use of an interpreter and distributed Gospels in the appropriate language afterwards. Often the committal was delayed on account of the grave proving either too short or too narrow for the coffin, the service having to wait until the grave had been rectified. At other times a sudden tropical downpour would fill the grave to overflowing with water whereupon it would be necessary to wait till all was baled out.

The Chinese community was busy celebrating a feast day as I was passing the building used as a temple and, knowing a good many of them, I committed the sacrilege of entering. There was quite a number of men present, most of them dressed in their best clothes and smoking opium pipes. Some were eating fowls, of which they had killed about ten, while others were dining off a great roasted pig which they seemed to be very much enjoying; other dishes including rice were also to be seen. There was a kind of altar carefully rigged up with Chinese pictures, inscriptions and a score of other little things that for politeness sake I did not care to examine too closely. I shook hands with the Chinese officiating at the altar and, though I was an intruder, was well received. I always found the Chinese to be friendly and we got on well together.

It is only as one lives amongst these people that one is able to understand something of the moral and spiritual problems confronting them and the hindrances to living a better life. The practice of the New French Canal Company in paying its employees on Sundays did not help matters for, while money was plentiful, Sunday marketing flourished as also gambling and drunkenness. There were problems of overcrowding with often in one hut or house as many families as there were rooms. Many of the camp buildings were partitioned with sheets of corrugated iron or boards which divided the buildings into rooms and which were 7 or 8 feet high, the rest of the space above being open up to the roof so that conversation, quarrelling and often filthy language could be heard by all the other families in the same building. I often wondered and marvelled that under such conditions one found some who were living truly godly lives unsullied by their surroundings, like the white flowers that one has heard of which grow at the mouth of a coal pit and retain their purity and whiteness in the midst of coal dust and dirt. Even in the one- or two-roomed little cabins conditions cannot be conducive to morality where there was a family of perhaps half-a-dozen and sometimes a relative or two staying in the home.

These were but some of the difficulties that confronted the missionary and that, without better housing, could not easily be solved. Immorality was one of the curses of the country, men and women living together without any sense of shame, the great majority of children being born out of wedlock; a curse that has been inherited from the old slave days. I conducted weddings where the couple's grown-up children have served as best man and bride's maids and the grand-children as train-bearers. Needless to say no one was ever received into church membership who was known to be living an immoral life. All applicants for

PANAMA PADRE

church membership had to show reasonable proof of conversion and a sincere desire to live the Christian life; they also had to attend an instruction class varying in duration from three to six months before being accepted for baptism.

Apart from Christians, one cannot help being disappointed with the inhumanity of man towards his fellow man and towards dumb creatures. When people talk glibly, as some do, about leaving native races to follow their own religions and are opposed to the sending of missionaries to convert these races from their benighted customs and faiths, one can but wish that such people could see for themselves the appalling fruits of this ignorance and spiritual darkness.

Soon after my arrival on the Isthmus I was told of a bed-ridden coloured woman living some 14 or 15 miles away who for years had been praying that God would send a missionary to work amongst her people and who, learning of my arrival, was very anxious to see me. She lived in a camp building located in the bush some distance back from the railway line. Accompanied by one of my day-school teachers as a guide I visited her and spent some time with her in conversation, Bible reading and prayer. Then, hearing in the distance the whistle of my train, I hurriedly said good-bye and, having to cross the long Barbacoas Bridge, ran to catch it. Little did I think that within an hour of my saying farewell, and before I had reached the end of my journey, she passed into the Great Beyond into the presence of her Lord. Her prayers had been answered.

Learning that a desperately ill man had crawled into an empty hut to die I went to investigate for myself. The man was in an awful condition for his legs and other parts of his body were simply alive with wriggling maggots; his was indeed a case of a living death while the smell was beyond description. I sent my man up to my Mission House to fetch some medical dressings and antiseptics and started to cleanse some of his open sores by washing out the maggots; I then made him as comfortable as possible and supplied him with some food, but he was almost too ill to eat. Next morning when I returned he was gone and, though I made careful enquiries, nobody seemed to know of his whereabouts; he had probably crawled into the bush to die. I had known of a similar case where conditions were so bad that even the buzzards had to be continually driven off and kept away; that sufferer soon died. Another time I learned of a poor leper who was dying, unattended and uncared for, on a canvas cot in an otherwise empty building. No one had done anything for him for several days, the stench being unbearable in his neglected condition in the tropical heat. I was glad to be able to do a little to make things easier for him and to provide him with some nourishment; a day or two later I laid his poor body to rest.

One often saw the same sort of callous treatment meted out to dumb creatures. When passing along a trail I saw a poor horse all skin and bone lying in a ditch into which it had fallen; the beast was too weak and emaciated to get out and I was told that it had been there since the previous evening. On making enquiries I found that it belonged to a native living some considerable distance back in the mountains. Many people must have passed it yet no one appeared to have thought of trying to assist it out of its difficulty. So I went to a native hut not far away and asked some men who were there to come and help move the horse. Not they; they said it was not theirs. I had to go for four of my own people and a rope, and in less than ten minutes we had the poor creature out but it was too weak to stand and died the next day. On another occasion the cow-catcher of a passenger train pushed a young heifer off the track throwing it into the swamp alongside, an almost daily event. It was a Sunday afternoon and many people went to have a look at it; two of its legs were badly injured but no one seemed to think of trying to get it out or of putting it out of its misery. At the time I was just preparing for evening service but I felt that something had to be done. I appealed for helpers but no one volunteered till I climbed down the embankment myself and started to try and pull the poor creature out; not till then did others come forward to assist. After having succeeded in our task the owner arrived and despatched the animal out of its suffering.

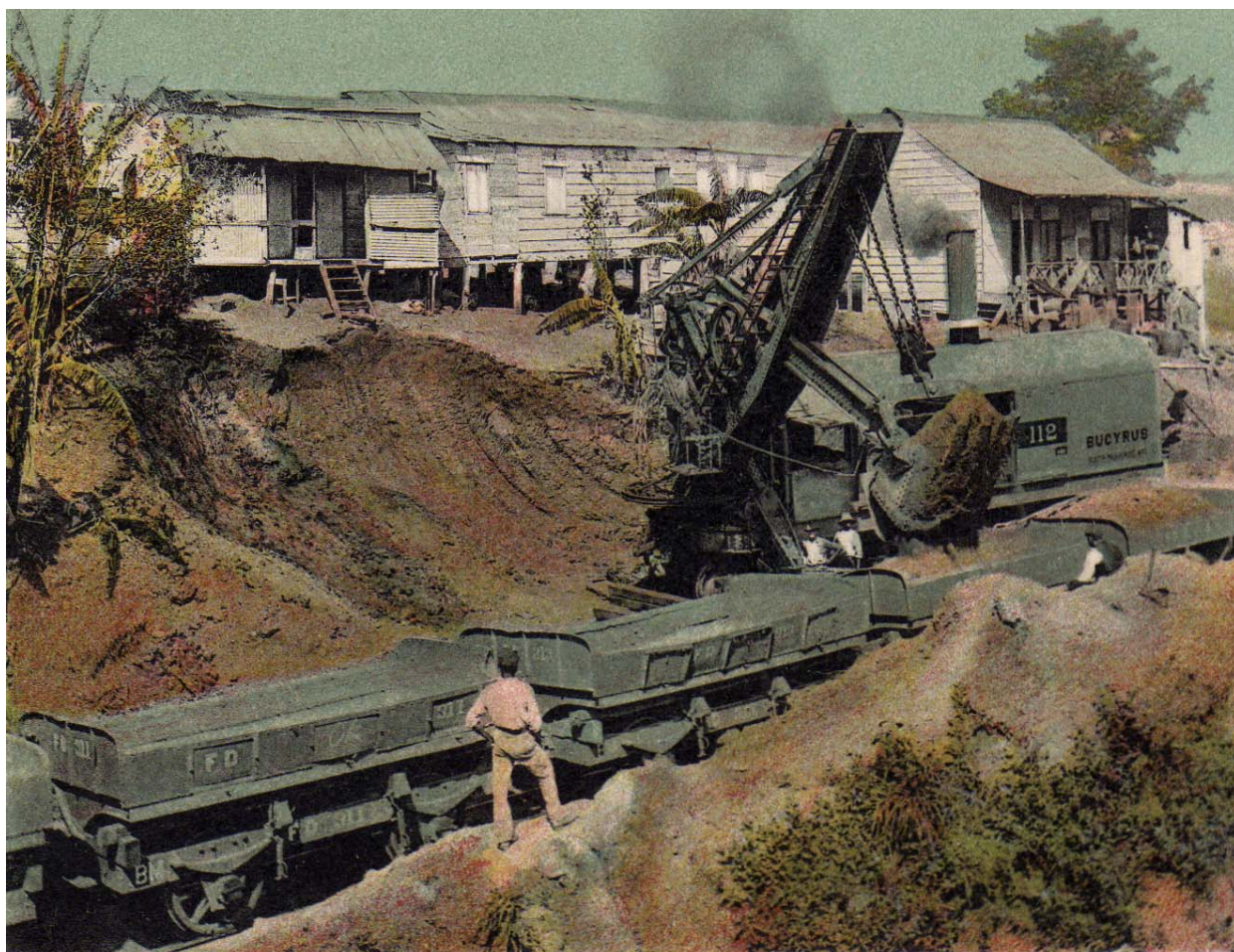
In April 1901 I opened a new mission church at Matachin, in a building kindly lent to us by the French Canal Company. My friend the Rev EC Notman with his wife had arrived from Bocas del Toro, en route for Jamaica, and it seemed a splendid opportunity to avail myself of his help in conducting the opening

PANAMA PADRE

services. For those who see the funny side of things, there were also present, in addition to Mr Notman, a Mr Oddman and a Mr Goodman in the same congregation. Amongst those who honoured us by attending was the Alcalde (Judge) dressed in a frock coat and wearing a silk hat (from where he produced them I do not know), but they looked strangely out of place in that building surrounded by bush on the fringe of the forest. He was a Colombian and nominally a Roman Catholic, and was accompanied by his Private Secretary. As there was no accommodation in which Mr and Mrs Notman could spend the night at Matachin, I arranged for them to return to Culebra by the last train of the day after taking the afternoon service, while I remained to conduct the evening one. No sooner was the service over than I mounted my horse, which had been brought to Matachin by my black man who was also mounted, and we set out on our seven mile return journey along the railroad track, both of us carrying lanterns and also cords for swimming our horses across rivers when passing round any bridges that the horses could not cross. We had not long left Matachin and the congregation was still making its way home when a party of revolutionists surrounded the Alcalde's house and carried him and his Secretary off with four or five of his supporters into the jungle as captives. To the best of my knowledge neither the Alcalde nor his Secretary were ever heard of again and the last time, if not the only time, that they heard the Gospel was on that Sunday afternoon and evening in our Baptist church. It was by means of these frequent nocturnal raids that the revolutionists captured judges, police officers and other government officials, carrying them into the bush; sometimes the captives would reappear months afterwards sick and in rags, while in other cases, such as the foregoing, would never be heard of again.

So, was all my work on the Isthmus worthwhile? Yes! Most certainly my first twelve months had been worthwhile.

PANAMA PADRE



*The original Culebra Church, twice enlarged, in the background between two houses.
This building was demolished in 1905 on account of the canal excavation work.*

Chapter 10

ANIMAL LIFE

In 1897 Ronald Ross brilliantly demonstrated that the anopheles mosquito was the infecting agent in malaria fever and just four years later, in 1901, William Gorgas clearly proved that the stegomyia mosquito was the responsible culprit for transmitting yellow fever; both were great and far-reaching discoveries. But in 1900 these experiments were still in their infancy; in Panama we knew nothing of them and we were scourged with both malaria and yellow fever. No water supply was laid on and many wells were polluted; in our ignorance we provided our own supply from rain caught from our roofs and stored in open barrels by the sides of our homes. Here the mosquitoes both swarmed and bred and the surface water was simply alive with their larvae. On maturing and becoming fully fledged these mosquitoes came in through the open windows or through the venetian shutters in clouds, for we possessed no glass in those early days. Though sleeping under a net one still could not keep the mosquito out for somehow they always managed to find a way in and, once inside, would feast on one till they became so bloated that one only had to clap one's hands together to kill them, thus smearing one's hands with one's own blood.

There were also the jiggers; how many a newcomer, including myself, has innocently committed the error of going outside his house in thin slippers, for the drier the ground the worse it will be for him. The jiggers find a way of getting into one's feet and burying themselves under one's skin or even burrowing under one's toe-nails, the experience is far from pleasant until one finally succeeds in removing them. Whether walking or riding in the jungle one cannot avoid brushing against the leaves and twigs of the dense tropical undergrowth and in so doing disturb the bush lice or red bugs by which name they were more commonly known. On one little leaf might be a small ball, not as big as a green pea, composed of hundreds of these bush lice which individually are almost invisible to the naked eye; when the leaf is touched the lice spread onto one's clothes, under one's clothes, on one's skin and under one's skin. Nobody can forget his first contact with them; only getting into a bath, in which bay rum has been added to the water, will rid one of this pest, and even this does not always succeed.

Ticks could be found on one's horse and dog and occasionally in one's own skin; they bury themselves in one's flesh and, like the mosquito, bloat themselves with one's blood until one pulls them away and kills them. To these can be added other pests: bees, wasps, hornets, flying ants and various other members of the insect world including a species of flying beetle that is about the size of a tennis ball and which, when flying at night, is capable of giving one a nasty knock. As for grasshoppers, one that I captured measured over 5 inches in length.

Riding my horse through the bush on one particularly hot and sultry day, I broke my whip on his back because he was going too slowly; so I sprang off and taking out my pocket knife proceeded to cut a small stick from the bush with which I could induce him to go faster. Alas for myself, unknowingly I had disturbed a hornet's nest and I soon knew it. They swarmed out on myself and on my horse forcing us to flee while I tried to strike them off as we went, but not before I was fairly punished, as also my horse. Instead of continuing my journey I had to beat an ignominious retreat for home, a sadder and wiser man, for it was several days before all the swellings on my face, neck, hands and arms subsided and I was able to go out of doors again. Birds often build their nests near hornets' nests because, while the hornets do not molest the birds, the hornets sting to death any animal or reptile which may approach to steal the birds' eggs or

PANAMA PADRE

young. For the same reason some birds build their nests on the thorn bushes, the spikes of which are often an inch and a quarter long, as they are safe there from being disturbed by either animals or snakes.

One of my church members brought me a gift of a quantity of beautiful tropical plants for the purpose of starting a garden but, as plans at the time were not sufficiently advanced for this, I planted them all out in boxes and placed them around the veranda. This was no sooner done than within an hour the sauba (leaf-cutting) ants found them and swarmed over everything with the result that, by the time that I discovered what was taking place, nearly every leaf of every plant had been stripped. Summoning help we swept them off with brooms and, as they were arriving by tens of thousands, I tried several other devices to remove them but with little better success till I resorted to laying lines of shavings soaked in petrol across their path and setting these on fire, I also made small fires on the ground around the pillars on which the house stood; this had the desired effect for they soon beat a retreat leaving me in undisputed possession. To be entirely rid of the sauba ants I finally had to destroy their nest as they were rapidly stripping every leaf and tree around the house. The nest was underground but easily located by the large mounds of excavated earth thrown up above the surface, some to a height of one or two feet. As to the size of the nests, HW Bates, the well known naturalist, speaks of them as often reaching 40 yards in circumference. Beneath the ground, and often many feet in depth, is a vast network of subterranean galleries tenanted by literally millions of these industrious little creatures. Adopting the method of the country we first blocked all but a few of the exits of this vast labyrinth of tunnels, into the remaining holes an explosive fluid was poured and a lighted match dropped in. There followed an explosion and the vast nest with its inhabitants was almost totally destroyed. After this came a most pathetic scene. There are always a small number of these ants living on the outer fringe which escape, their work seems to be that of undertakers; connected with every nest there is a "dump" where the ants always place their refuse and dead. This dump is usually at some little distance from the rest of the nest; to it the "undertaker" ants drag all the dead till they accumulate them in great heaps, whereupon they themselves either die or altogether abandon the nest. The tunnels are usually from 4 to 5 inches in diameter and connect large chambers into which the millions of small circular pieces of leaves, cut with their scissor-like jaws, are carried and apparently stored. These small pieces of leaves are about the size of a copper cent or silver threepenny piece. Different ants have different tasks to perform, there is no confusion and the work is all undertaken with systematic precision; each nest appears to possess one or more queen ants which never come near the surface, one has to dig deeply to obtain a specimen. It was a wise man of old who once said, "Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise; which having no guide, overseer or ruler provideth her meat in summer and gathereth her food in harvest". One might learn many useful lessons from the sauba ants.

Bats were plentiful and, as in the construction of all our church buildings we left an open space between the top of the side walls and the eaves of the roof for the purpose of ventilation, the bats had all the access they needed for entrance; hence, scores of them could often be seen hanging inside just under the apex of the roof. Some of these often included the blood-sucking vampire, a bat as large as a pigeon. I have found these bats at night drawing blood from the jugular vein of my horse and have had to drive them off. The following morning there is always ample evidence of their nocturnal activities, congealed blood marking the place on the neck of the animal where they had punctured the skin. I have seen the feet of negroes showing the scars where these bats have been sucking blood from the soles of their feet. In some inexplicable way the bats do not appear to disturb or awaken the sleeper whether man or horse. When the Americans took over the construction of the Canal they made use of fine copper gauze netting to screen the sides of the corrals where the horses and mules were stabled; another method that they tried was that of burning electric light all night in the stalls where the animals were tethered and having a watchman on duty all night to make sure that the bats did not molest the horses. One Sunday afternoon, whilst I was preaching at one of my village churches, a bat was flying about, confused no doubt by the daylight; I did not pay any attention to it as such occasional visitors were not uncommon. But as I was leading the congregation in prayer I suddenly became conscious that the little uninvited visitor was crawling up inside my trousers and,

PANAMA PADRE

as we only wore a minimum of underclothing in the tropics, the bat, though harmless, was too near to be pleasant. So I somewhat abruptly ended my prayer, gave out a hymn and, as the congregation rose to sing, I disappeared into the vestry. A moment later the door silently opened and one of my deacons came in, "Was minister taken ill?" he asked. But by that time I had my trousers nearly off and the offending bat ejected, this he promptly killed.

Snakes were common on the Isthmus. Whilst a room was being prepared for me, in which I was to sleep after preaching down the line, coiled up in one corner was found a very poisonous snake which was killed in my presence. At least two or three times I have myself killed snakes that I have found in our church buildings. Once my teacher found in the church a large green whip snake that, when approached, immediately decamped through a hole in the floor. When ascending a hill in company with my teacher he drew my attention to the unusual spectacle of a poisonous snake with its head concealed in an old stone beer bottle; this was so unusual and extraordinary that I suggested capturing it. The teacher seized the snake by the tail and swung the snake round and round with its head still inside the beer bottle. Suddenly the bottle flew off enabling the snake to be killed, whereupon I examined the bottle in a desire to solve the mystery; inside it I found a disgorged lizard. Evidently the snake had found the lizard and pursued it; the lizard had sought refuge by disappearing into the stone bottle but was followed by the snake which, with its head inside the bottle, swallowed the lizard. As the snake, however, could not pass the lizard down its neck on account of the narrow neck of the bottle, it remained there imprisoned by its own greediness. It took the rough handling by my teacher to force it to disgorge the lizard.

One of the most interesting sights that it was my good fortune to witness was from the safe distance of a railway carriage window. As the train was passing a swamp, not more than a hundred yards away, a fierce fight was taking place between a boa constrictor and, as well as I could observe, a crocodile. One could not see all because of the swamp grass but, apparently, the crocodile whilst in the water had seized the boa constrictor about the middle of its body; what was certain was that the boa was held down at its centre and was writhing in terrible wrath and agony as with its coils it lashed the water with tremendous force in its efforts to free itself. How the battle ended I do not know, for the train soon left the combatants behind, but, judging by the height of the water lashed into the air, the boa was a large one and it was a struggle to the death. Once when riding back along the railway track after taking a service I passed two crocodiles, the larger one was on the bank of the Chagres River and the smaller one on the edge of the swamp by the side of the line. Dismounting I struck the smaller one with a stone causing it to slide off into the water; their hides are so thick that one cannot easily hurt them.

Both monkeys and parrots were plentiful in the jungle but the former were not easily seen and only occasionally shot or captured; it is a simple matter for the monkeys to conceal themselves in the dense foliage of the trees upon observing an approaching man. I have often seen parrots flying overhead in small numbers, whereas parrakeets travel in hundreds; I have known the latter to settle for the night in a tree close to the Mission House and to make such a noise with their chatter that it has often been difficult to make one's self heard. Toucans, with their gaudy plumage and enormous beaks, were not uncommon and are easily tamed; they are naturally greedy birds and they thrive in captivity. I had two in my possession that would always come and sit on my window-sill at meal times and wait for me to throw to them small pieces of banana which they would catch in their large bills from a distance of 4 to 5 feet as accurately as a monkey could catch them in his paws. As long as one continues to feed them they will continue to eat till they disgorge whereupon they will start all over again.

Pumas and jaguars were occasionally shot but the constant blasting in the Canal bed caused them to keep well away from its vicinity; however, I have bought their skins which I sent home to Britain. When visiting the family of one of our best hunters, who lived in a native hut on the edge of the jungle, he quite unexpectedly returned from a hunting expedition. I had never before seen him so thoroughly frightened, he was trembling all over and said that he had just narrowly escaped death. According to his account he had not gone very far into the bush when he suddenly heard a growl not far from him and, to use his own words,

PANAMA PADRE

"Saw a great tiger, its back being as high as a table". Though he had his loaded gun in his hands and was quite accustomed to shooting large game, the size of this animal caused him to completely lose his nerve so that he could not fire but ran all the way home instead. The animal was undoubtedly a jaguar, known locally as a tiger.

Plentiful on the Mission Hill were mygales, large hairy crab-like spiders with bodies nearly two inches long and legs six inches long; these spiders are covered with coarse grey and reddish hairs and are very much larger and more venomous than the better known tarantula for which they are often mistaken. They feed on small birds, mice, lizards, ants and other insects that they capture. It is no exaggeration to say that I killed many scores of mygales, finding them in holes and under stones around the Mission House.

Amongst other interesting animals common in Panama is the tapir (river cow) which measures as much as 6 feet in length and weighs anywhere from 7 cwt. to half a ton. There is also the peccary, a pugnacious hog-like animal, which usually moves in herds of from 50 to 100 and to escape from which the hunter's only chance of safety is to climb a tree; however, caught young they are easily tamed and make quite interesting pets. Other denizens of the forest include wild deer which are plentiful, the large ant-eater, the sloath and the armadillo.

Chapter 11

THE STORM BURSTS

After several years of intermittent fighting the deteriorating political situation rapidly came to a head on Tuesday 19th November 1901 when a small band of liberals appeared in the afternoon at Matachin and cut all telephone and telegraph wires; simultaneously a large force appeared at Las Cascadas where the revolutionists placed railroad ties across the line thereby holding up the passenger train from Panama. In the days of the single line it was a rule that when the north-bound train (i.e. to Colon) was late, in the absence of specific instructions, the south-bound train (i.e. to Panama) always had the right of way and the other train was required to wait in the nearest siding wherever there were double tracks. Hence, the south-bound train arrived at Las Cascadas where the north-bound train had been kept waiting for an hour and a half; on its arrival at Las Cascadas the revolutionists ordered it to pass the waiting north-bound train and to continue its journey. No sooner had it gone than some 160 revolutionists boarded the waiting train and, having removed the obstructing ties, ordered the train at once to proceed to Colon. On approaching Colon in the semi-darkness, for it was 8.30 p.m., the train being 2½ hours late, and the moon was only in its first quarter, orders were given for the train to stop just north of Folks River to enable the revolutionists to disembark. At this point the men were only a few hundred yards from the government cuartel (this building was later to be converted into the Isthmian Canal Commission Commissary) then occupied by about fifty soldiers and some twenty police. The surprise was complete; after a brief but sharp encounter the building was easily captured, some 19 Colombian soldiers being killed and another 25 wounded, the liberals losing one man killed and a few wounded. Colon was captured. To return to Las Cascadas, as soon as the two trains had both left the town about 400 liberals ripped up the rails and cut further wires, to make quite sure that no relief train carrying troops from Panama could be sent to Colon, and then marched to the next town, Empire, where they assumed complete control. The revolutionists now had 35 miles of line between Empire and Colon in their hands. Numerous new recruits joined them and the liberal colours seemed to be conspicuous everywhere.

On the following Saturday I went to investigate things for myself, taking the morning train from Culebra to Colon. At Empire, where the liberals had their own flag flying, our train was boarded and searched before we were allowed to proceed and from there to Colon a liberal armed guard consisting of several soldiers accompanied us. At Barbacoas the revolutionists held a strong position commanding the long railroad bridge; here again our train was held up and searched, guns being aimed on the locomotive and carriages all the time. When finally we were allowed to proceed I was amused by the revolutionists giving our train a most hearty cheer as we moved off. Also amusing was the fact that the officers and soldiers passing through the train shook hands with all of us and politely said, "Good-Day". As our train reached Gatun a large force of liberal soldiers covered our train with guns from an embankment not three yards from the carriage windows; every man with one knee on the ground and a finger on the trigger of his gun. Though the situation was tense there was something comical about it all. Once more our train was searched and we were all honoured by a repetition of the hand-shaking. At Monkey Hill (later renamed Mount Hope) station more revolutionists were posted, but our train was allowed to proceed without further molestation. Everywhere the liberals received a most hearty welcome; there seemed to be a general relief at their assuming authority, while the Railroad Company appeared to allow them a pretty free hand. My return to Culebra was similar to my outward journey.

PANAMA PADRE

At Culebra we had frequent visits from liberal patrols but as none was stationed here we were still nominally under the jurisdiction of the government though the liberals were encamped at Empire only a mile away. The liberal assault was no doubt due to the fact that General Carlos Alban, the civil and military Governor of Panama and a brave and fearless soldier, had taken about 700 men, some overland and others by sea, to Chorrera, a distance of about 20 miles, in an effort to cut off a considerable force of liberals that he had heard were encamped there. Learning of his departure, other revolutionists took advantage of it to make their sudden and spectacular appearance on the line, capturing three-quarters of it as well as the all-important terminus of Colon.

On Sunday 24th November 1901 Culebra had its baptism of fire. It happened to be our Missionary Sunday and the Rev W Jacobs, minister of the Methodist church at Colon was preaching on my behalf. From early morning revolutionist soldiers occupied the town and were continually passing and repassing our church during the morning service; they were identifiable by a red band around the hat and another around one arm. As things were becoming somewhat lively, Mr Jacobs decided that it would be wiser for him to return to Colon by the afternoon train rather than remain for the evening service, so I accompanied him to Culebra railroad station in time for him to catch the 3.20 train. For the information of any reader only familiar with the Isthmus of a later date I would point out that the Culebra railroad station of 1901 occupied a different location, nearly an eighth of a mile further south and round the bend, than the present one. On arrival at the station we found it crowded with curious sightseers waiting to see the fun of the train being stopped and searched, as was happening with all trains just before they reached, and just after they left, the station. But there was no fun this time; nearly an hour passed and no train came. I was sitting in the booking office with the Station Agent, who was Station Master, Booking Clerk and everything else, when suddenly a liberal horseman came tearing down the line; leaping from his pony he entered the booking office and demanded from the Agent the key of the switch of the siding. The Station Agent stated that he did not have it, that only the locomotive driver carried the key. "Then", said the liberal, "we will break the lock, for if the train is carrying troops we are determined to derail it". Without a moment's delay he sprang into his saddle and raced to the switch little more than a hundred yards away. I watched him as he dismounted; with the butt of his rifle he smashed the padlock and, throwing the switch, changed the points. Hardly had he done this than we heard the first whizz of rifle bullets coming from the direction of Rio Grande, quickly followed by the splutter of machine gun fire. It appeared that General Alban, learning of what had taken place during his absence, had lost no time in returning with his men to the city of Panama where he commandeered a special train with two flat cars to convey his troops as well as some machine guns and small cannon. On reaching Pedro Miguel the driver of the train uncoupled the locomotive, taking it to the rear of the train to push instead of pull as it approached the danger zone. At Rio Grande bridge the troops disembarked and split into three companies; one made its advance along the line, the second through Rio Grande village and the third through the Canal cut. Meanwhile a small picket of revolutionary soldiers who had been stationed on both summits of the railroad cutting, near Rio Grande bridge and through which the track passed, opened fire on the advancing government troops and then fell back towards Culebra station, firing as they went; fire which the government troops took good care to return. As the bullets came whizzing past the railroad station I never saw a crowd disperse so quickly in my life; people may have come to see the "fun", but they nearly fell over each other in their frantic efforts to climb the hill and get away. Then the real fighting began. Some of the revolutionary soldiers had already taken up a commanding position on the Old French Dump where the government soldiers had constructed trenches less than two weeks before and afterwards abandoned them; these trenches provided good cover for the liberals. At that time, where the Lirio Mills later stood, there was a narrow swamp that continued the whole length of the dump effectively isolating the Panama Railroad from the dump; many a government soldier lost his life while trying to cross it, through being exposed to the fire of the revolutionists' guns.

While I was at the station and just before the actual fighting began, an officer of the liberal forces seized my horse taking it from the paddock for the use of his commanding officer, but as he led my horse

PANAMA PADRE

away he was stopped no less than three times by as many different people who told him that he could not take that horse because it belonged to the Inglese Protestante Padre. At first he would not believe it, but when stopped the third time he not only went to the trouble of returning the horse but also of replacing it safely in the paddock. His unwillingness to believe that the horse was mine was understandable as it had on it the brand of a large ranch owner from whom I had bought it and who was a well-known supporter of the government; this mark doubtless the officer had recognised.

On my return to my Mission House, as a safety precaution, I ran up my British Red Ensign on my veranda pole. But, instead of it proving a protection, I think it was my undoing, for, the revolutionary flag also being red and few if any of the soldiers knowing the difference between a British flag and any other, it soon drew the fire onto the Mission House instead of diverting the fire from it. Thirty one bullets hit the house, ripping holes in the corrugated iron roof and the wooden casing of the walls just as though they had been cardboard. One of my negro deacons, an old man, was in the church vestry when the firing started and a passing bullet shattered the bone of his left arm. Under fire some men carried him up to the Mission House for me to dress the wound and stop the bleeding. We laid him on my study floor while I went to my medical cupboard to obtain some bandages and dressings. Hardly had I done so than, as I knelt down to bind his shattered arm, two bullets ripped through the glass door of the medicine cupboard breaking bottles and tearing through some cardboard boxes just where my head had been not a minute before. Three bullets cut the frame of a deck chair in as many different places, while another went right through the corner of my table and yet another fell spent on my bed. For a time we all had to lie flat on the floor till things eased a little.

General Carlos Alban, the hero on the government side in the defence of Panama City sixteen months before and whose courage alone saved the city from falling into the hands of the liberals, had his epaulette shot off his uniform and his shoulder grazed by a bullet early in the fight. Later in the day he narrowly escaped death when the horse he was riding was shot dead just opposite Empire graveyard; when I saw the body of the horse next day the buzzards had already so thoroughly done their work that nothing but its bones were left.

The fighting, which had begun at 4.20 in the afternoon, lasted five hours and further isolated shots continued right through the night. Though the government troops had the better of the engagement, it was only because the liberals had completely run out of ammunition and so had to retreat; but not before they had severely punished the government forces which suffered some 40 killed and 80 wounded against the revolutionists' loss of two killed and three wounded. It was a sad sight when I went down to the railroad station next day for the platform was just covered with wounded, over some of whom I had to step in order to reach the booking office. Four non-combatants (Jamaicans) were amongst the killed; one small child sitting between her father's legs for greater protection was killed instantly after the bullet first passed through her father's leg. One of my deacons had his hat carried off his head by a bullet passing through it, though he himself was unharmed. The dead were buried anywhere, often in the shallowest of graves just where they had fallen; some were buried at both ends of the station platform, one in a water course from which we used to obtain some of our drinking water. A few of the surviving village pigs disinterred the body.

The first passenger train from Panama on the line after it had been reopened reached Culebra at 10.00 a.m. next day. In front of the locomotive was pushed an armoured car covered with steel plates, on the construction of which the Railroad Workshops had worked all night; it contained field pieces with their muzzles peeping out through holes arranged for the purpose. The intention was to reopen the line to traffic regardless of whether there was fighting or not; nearly 200 United States marines were on that train, they were on the footplate of the locomotive and in the baggage car and passenger cars. When the train came alongside the platform at Culebra the marines gave a cheer, some jumped off and I was immediately besieged with questions as to what had happened, where was the enemy and what had taken place? The next train to arrive was the passenger train which had left Colon the previous afternoon at 2.45; it arrived at Culebra at 11.30 a.m., having taken 18½ hours to cover 37 miles; as for the passengers, they had had to spend the night in the train. At Culebra were placed into the baggage cars of the train as many wounded as

PANAMA PADRE

could be crowded in, this was repeated for the next few days until all the wounded had been taken to the city of Panama.

On the Tuesday morning I took the early train to Colon to see the British Consul about protection for some of my people who had suffered; as natives of the British West Indies these people being citizens of the British Empire. Apart from some delays all went well until our train reached Bailamonos where our locomotive was nearly hit by a couple of bullets which barked a tree close by. While the train was standing still I jumped out and picked up a handful of used cartridges giving them to some of the American lady passengers as souvenirs; they were in transit to New York. As the sound of gun fire in front of us was frequent, the fighting still being in progress at Barbacoas Bridge, our train fell back as far as Matachin to enable us to have telephone communication with Colon. Finally a cease-fire of one hour was arranged to allow our train to pass. On reaching San Pablo I saw soldiers burning the bodies of some of their comrades who had been killed; when we reached Barbacoas Bridge the train had to crawl across to permit the removal of both the wounded and the dead. The dead were disposed of by being thrown into the swift flowing Chagres River below. From here to Frijoles we passed some hundreds of Colombian soldiers who were mostly bare-footed and who were accompanied by camp women, typical Amazonians, carrying guns and wearing belts of cartridges. Though our train was due in Colon at 10.45 a.m. we did not reach the town until 4.30 in the afternoon; all the passengers were tired and hungry as nothing was available to eat on the way. On calling at the British Consulate I found the Consul to be out, so I decided to remain in Colon for the night. I called at the Consulate early next morning when the Consul kindly saw me but said that there was nothing that could be done to help my people, apart from assisting any who might wish to seek asylum on one of the British warships in the harbour should it be necessary.

The government troops had received reinforcements thereby increasing their number from 800 to 1200, less the wounded and killed. At Barbacoas a small force of 95 revolutionists held the brow of the hill on the north side of the bridge and kept up a sweeping fire on the poor fellows who attempted to cross from the San Pablo side. The government forces, whose prospects were brightened by the arrival of the reinforcements, none the less had a long and weary fight. But for General Alban sending troops across the Chagres River higher up, thus undertaking a rear attack as well as a frontal attack upon the small liberal force located on the height and thus commanding the bridge, it is doubtful if the revolutionists would have been compelled to retreat at all as long as their ammunition held out. As it was they held the hill and prevented the government troops from crossing the bridge for seven hours during which time they inflicted severe losses on the government troops but lost only eight themselves. At Buena Vista, two miles north of Frijoles, 40 Liberals held a height against 400 government troops for over 18 hours killing 80 of the enemy and burying three of their own number on the top of the hill before they had to retreat. Meanwhile General Domingo Dias, whose arrival with reinforcements for the liberals had been daily expected, was delayed on account of the heavy rains and the swollen condition of the rivers and so was unable to reach the line in time for his men to be of any use. The fighting at Buena Vista proved to be the fiercest and the longest and, though the government troops outnumbered them by ten to one, the revolutionists for some time longer might have continued to successfully hold them at bay, but for General Alban repeating the same tactics as at Barbacoas in sending by a circuitous route a large force which attacked in the rear the 40 liberals holding the height. It was estimated that in the three engagements the Government lost 450 men, while the liberal losses were not more than one-tenth of that number. Two days later, through the good offices of the Commander of an American warship, then in the harbour, and some of the Consuls in Colon, to avoid further bloodshed, Colon was surrendered to the government and honourable terms were offered to members of the revolutionary party allowing them to leave the Isthmus on ships then in the port; and so for just a few short weeks we were to enjoy peace once more.

But it was a sad business. During the fighting both my Tabernilla and Frijoles church buildings had been commandeered and occupied by government troops. On going to Frijoles I found that most of my congregation had taken refuge in the bush; our church building had been broken into, benches overturned

PANAMA PADRE

and fowls' heads and feathers were everywhere, the fowls having been killed, plunged into boiling water and eaten semi-raw by the hungry government soldiers. Lying about were rags of old clothing and there were blood stains from the wounded on both seats and floor; truly war leaves misery and desolation in its train. As for my church members, they returned from spending the night in the bush, wet, disheartened and dejected. All had had some of their possessions looted by the soldiers, while some had lost almost everything except for the clothes on their backs which were the worse for their owners having had to spend the night in the drenching rain. I spent the whole day with them and tried to encourage them as we scrubbed and cleaned the church; I was thankful to have a few bananas to eat and water to drink to supply my needs for the day. One of my members had had the unpleasant experience of having a gun levelled at him by an Amazonian woman who was passing through the village, she would have shot him but for the intervention of his wife and of a petty government official. Hardly had she left and gone 300 or 400 yards when she was blown to pieces by a liberal shell. At this time I saw numerous such armed women, one was even wearing a sword at her side.

My deacon who had had his arm smashed by a bullet at Culebra slowly recovered in Panama Hospital. He had previously had a narrow escape: during the revolution of 1885 he was living in a Canal camp in Culebra sharing a building with 48 other labourers; one evening he had gone to spend the night with some friends and while away some Indians attacked the camp and hanged or shot all the occupants, my deacon had been the sole survivor. For the next few days I was kept busy investigating some of the sad stories of those who had suffered. There was the case of a mother who had had her little daughter killed by her side. A tailor who had been looted of everything by the soldiers and who had narrowly escaped with his life. A woman, whose past life would not bear looking into but who had forsaken her old life of sin, had been robbed by the soldiers of her sow with its litter on which she was relying for her support during the coming months. Another whose husband was dragged from his bed at night, roped and taken away and shot. These were but some of the many stories that I listened to; some people needed help, others advice.

Following their defeat on the line and the surrender of Colon after they had held it for a week, the revolutionists were to reappear, like a smouldering fire that had been extinguished in one place, in their struggle for liberty against a government that was not only reactionary but also alien and oppressive. The liberals had the sympathy of the mass of the people in their fight and, though greatly inferior in numbers and ammunition compared to the government soldiers, they were acknowledged to be far superior as fighters and it was a common saying that though the government had won the victory, the liberals had won the battles.

Whilst I was ill at Culebra with fever during January 1902, I was awakened early one morning before dawn by the sound of heavy gun fire coming from the direction of the city of Panama, gun fire which resulted in the sinking of the "Lautaro" and the death of General Carlos Alban. The "Lautaro" had originally belonged to the Chilean Steamship Line but had been seized by the government of Panama and equipped with guns for the purpose of being sent in search of the "Padilla", a small vessel owned by the revolutionists. When General Alban accompanied by his officers went on board the "Lautaro" in the evening they found the crew hopelessly drunk and totally unfit to sail. The crew had broken open the door of the spirit room and had freely imbibed and, among other drunken excesses, all the drinking water had been let out of the tanks. As it was quite clear that nothing could be undertaken that night, General Alban and his staff retired to sleep. However, just before dawn they were aroused with the information that a small vessel, showing no colours, was approaching.

It proved to be the "Padilla", the very vessel of which the "Lautaro" was about to go in search, but instead of the conservatives seeking her first, she had come in search of them. Without loss of time the "Padilla" opened fire, her first shot hitting the "Lautaro" and dismounting one of her guns; her second shot killed General Alban and several of his men. Another Colombian gunboat, the "Chucuito", had by this time arrived, with General Esteban Huertas and General HL Jefferies on board, to take part in the fray, but their guns made no impression on the "Padilla" which continued to pound the "Lautaro" till she caught fire and, bursting into flames, slowly began to sink. Then her powder magazine exploded and she disappeared into a

PANAMA PADRE

watery grave. For years afterwards her masts could be seen, at low tide, in Panama Bay near the island of Perico, protruding above the surface of the water. The "Padilla" continued in the service of the revolutionists till the signing of the Peace Treaty nearly a year later.

Meanwhile the revolutionists were far from idle on shore. They started to reappear on the line; one night a large party of them turned up at Empire, while over one hundred of them marched past Culebra early the next morning in the direction of Panama. Another night it was the government troops who visited us, arriving after dark when all the stores and saloons were closed, but they quickly compelled the owners to reopen and to supply them *ad libitum* with all the liquor that they could consume. Having become thoroughly drunk they celebrated throughout the night by firing endless rounds of cartridges in the narrow village street. At Aguadulce General Herrera, the liberal leader, assisted by Victoriano Lorenzo, an Indian chief, with his followers defeated the Colombian forces and captured the town taking a number of prisoners. And at Bocas del Toro there were disturbances of another kind while my friend the Rev EC Notman was acting as British Consul during the absence of the regular Consul on leave. There the whole trouble was caused by the shameful high-handed action of, and looting by, the government troops who were stationed there. A British warship, HMS "Tribune", was sent to investigate and a demonstration of force had the desired effect.

But, as will be seen, it would not be until 21st November 1902 that the three-year revolution would cease.

Chapter 12

FEVER

Overwork and the strain of events connected with the revolution made me an easy prey to my second attack of malaria fever. On Christmas Eve 1901, feeling very worn out and with a bad headache and with a heavy day's work before me, I retired to bed earlier than usual but soon after midnight awoke conscious that I had a high temperature and was in for a good dose of fever.

I had arranged a baptismal service in the Rio Grande Lagoon for early Christmas morning and a full day of services to follow. I slept fitfully until 5.30 a.m. when I tried to rise and prepare to go to conduct the baptismal service a mile and a half away, but I was too dizzy and ill and could hardly stand, much less eat, so I had to lie down again and slept till nearly 6.30. I then forced myself to get up for already many hundreds of people would be making their way to the lagoon and I felt that I could not disappoint them. I knew that it was madness on my part to attempt it and the height of folly, but some of the people would have come long distances overnight while others would have been travelling since before dawn and I had not the heart to fail them, so, though I was running a very high temperature, I felt that I must go through with the service at all costs. How I managed to take the service I hardly know for I felt desperately ill and had a blinding headache, but God, as He has always done, helped me through. I returned home and went straight to bed where I slept till 10.30 a.m. when I again roused myself sufficiently to go down to the church in Culebra and take the 11.00 service, followed by the communion service at which I received 19 new members, most of whom I had baptised that morning. Cancelling all other appointments for the day I returned home and went back to bed.

After three weeks of raging fever, during which I could keep nothing down, the fever abated leaving me as weak and helpless as a kitten; if I wanted to go into the next room my black man had to pick me up in his arms and carry me. My legs were useless and more like umbrella sticks while their skin was so hot and blistered that they had to be oiled with a feather as I could not bear them to be touched, even with a soft rag, as the skin was peeling off. Everybody was wonderfully kind and from far and near negroes and natives brought me fowls, fresh eggs and everything that they could think of, while an old Scotsman, whose life I had been instrumental in saving when he was desperately ill, sent me fresh milk every day, a luxury almost unknown on the line in those days when we could only buy tinned milk. Jamaicans, Barbadians, St Lucians, Colombians and others all seemed to vie with one another to bring their gifts. These my man enjoyed for, despite his best efforts at cooking, I was hardly able to eat anything. When I was at my worst a plum pudding arrived from my mother, it was carefully packed in a tin and was, of course, intended for Christmas, but came too late. I was far too ill then to think about anything, so my man put it safely away unopened in a cupboard and there it stayed for nearly three weeks. One morning I woke up feeling a little better for the first time and wishing for something to tempt my appetite. I had come to loathe the chicken broth, always swimming in sweet oil, that was made for me and that I always vomited up as soon as ever I took a spoonful of it; it was just the same with milk or soft eggs, I could keep nothing down. Then suddenly I bethought myself of my mother's plum pudding and so I told my man to find the parcel and open it. He did so; the pudding was green with mildew, this I told him to scrape off. I forget whether I told him to boil it or not, but I do remember asking him if he knew how to make custard. No, he did not; I doubt if he had ever heard of it before. I did not know either; I did not tell him that but I told him to beat the yoke of an egg and mix it with

PANAMA PADRE

some condensed milk and pour it over the plum pudding, this he did; it was custard. With some sugar on top of the pudding I started to eat it and enjoy it. It was the first solid food that I had kept down for three weeks and it was good; it was my mother's plum pudding. From that moment, slowly, very slowly it is true, I began to recover.

It was during this illness that one morning, when my man had gone down to the village to do some shopping and had locked me in the house as I was helpless and could do nothing for myself, some government soldiers started shooting in the village, one or two of the bullets passing uncomfortably near to the Mission House. Experience from previous occasions had taught me that the only safe place, and even that could not be depended upon, should the house be hit again, was the floor; so I rolled off my bed onto the floor, but when the firing ceased I was far too weak and helpless to return to my bed. My man had evidently also thought it wise to seek some place of safety for he did not return till four or five hours later in the afternoon, so there I lay helpless and locked in till he came back.

As I was still too weak to stand or to do anything for myself, I decided that it would be better for me to go away for a complete change and, as England, it being winter there, was quite out of the question, I purposed first to go to Jamaica. So I was carried down to the railway station and placed in the baggage car of the passenger train. At Colon I was met and gently transferred into a native coach, but every movement was a most painful process. I was taken to the Methodist Mission House where the Rev W Jacobs very kindly made me welcome and where I remained for two weeks till the departure of my steamer. In Colon I was placed under the care of a second doctor who was very kind and who said that he could not understand why I had not died twice over at Culebra; as he was an Irish-American, allowance can be made for the statement; while under his care in Colon I knew that he was much concerned lest he should lose me. Before being allowed to travel on the steamer I had to obtain a medical certificate from the Colon doctor as I was still desperately weak and unable to stand. Even the steamship company insisted on my undergoing a very thorough examination by the ship's doctor before it would take me. However, I was wonderfully provided for by the unexpected arrival of my friends the Rev and Mrs EC Notman who were travelling by the same steamer to attend some meetings in Jamaica and who volunteered to take me under their care, for all of which I was very grateful.

We reached the beautiful harbour of Port Royal, Kingston, Jamaica, on the 9th February 1902 but were quarantined for 24 hours because the ship's purser had forgotten to obtain the ship's clearance papers before leaving Colon, this being particularly necessary on account of the smallpox on the Isthmus.

As our Royal Mail steamer lay quarantined in Port Royal harbour on that peaceful Sunday afternoon in the sweltering heat of the tropical mid-day sun any sense of monotony was suddenly broken by the cry of "Man overboard". Not a moment was lost in manning and lowering a boat and sending it on its mission of rescue in that shark-infested sea. It appeared that one of the ship's firemen, a Spaniard, had been heavily imbibing the native liquor when ashore in Colon and this had affected his head so that he was crazy from drink and had to be confined in a cabin with an attendant day and night. On account of the intense heat the porthole was kept open and the Spaniard persuaded the attendant to allow him to divest himself of his clothes. Shortly afterwards the attention of the attendant was diverted to receive a plate of food at the cabin door and the fireman seized the opportunity to jump through the porthole into the sea, which must at once have had a sobering effect for he immediately began swimming away from the side of the ship. It was providential that the ship was lying at anchor so that the boat was able to reach the man quickly and pull him in, not a moment too soon for a second later, almost before the man was in the boat, we saw the fin of a large shark alongside. It was a near miss; when we docked at Kingston early next morning the man was removed still insane to the asylum.

On landing I was taken to the Mission House of the Rev William Pratt MA, minister of the East Queen Street Baptist church, Kingston. Mr Pratt, prior to his going to Jamaica in 1890, had been minister of Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, England. At their home Mr and Mrs Pratt did everything both for my comfort and to assist in my recovery and I quickly began to show the benefit of this treatment so that, assisted by

PANAMA PADRE

supporting myself on chairs, tables and banister railings I began to learn to walk again. A minister whom I had met just a year before failed to recognise me and on being told who I was came over to shake hands exclaiming, "Why, Brother Loveridge, that suit of clothes is far too big for you!"; to which I laughingly replied, "Only wait a month or two and you will have no need to say that". However, I did have a return of the fever and was ordered back to bed again, but I soon recovered. After a month spent in Kingston in the hospitable home of Mr and Mrs Pratt, who with their daughters had shown me much kindness, it was thought advisable that I should exchange the heat of Kingston for the cooler mountain air of Balaclava.

At Balaclava I was the guest of the Rev and Mrs JB Murphy who were both very kind to me and with whom I remained a fortnight. From there I went to Anchovey, as the guest of the Rev and Mrs FJ Hewett, here the scenery was grand beyond description, yet to me it did not compare with our wild virgin jungle at Panama; though friends could not have been kinder, I was restless and longing to be allowed to return again to the work which I loved on the Isthmus. But it was not to be, for the Missionary Committee would not hear of my returning for several months, so in April 1902, as it was now warmer in Great Britain, I decided that the best thing that I could do was to pay a visit home. I booked my passage on the RMS "Atrato"; one of the passengers was a well known doctor and authority on malaria fever who, with some of his friends took a somewhat embarrassing interest in me as a fever specimen from Panama.

I had purposely given no hint to my family at home in Britain of my expected return not knowing what possible hindrances might occur and so took them completely by surprise, receiving a royal welcome. The cooler climate of home greatly facilitated my rapid recovery such that I was able to accept a few preaching engagements and made a trip to visit my Uncle Hugh and Aunt Phoebe Wallace in Ireland, Aunt Phoebe being one of my mother's sisters.

But the time came when I felt that I must return to my own work in Panama and I began to make preparations accordingly. All the doctors that I had seen had been unanimous about one thing and that was that I must never go back to the Isthmus, but I was unwilling to follow their advice. When my mother knew that I was resolved to return she pleaded with me to accompany her up to London to visit a specialist on tropical diseases, which like a good son I did just to please her. After a most thorough examination that lasted about an hour the doctor said to me, "Well, Mr Loveridge I will not say that you are never to go back, but take twelve month's complete rest and recuperation at home, then come back and see me in a year's time and I will thoroughly re-examine you and give you my verdict". I thanked the doctor and left the room. In the ante-room my mother was anxiously waiting for me and asked, "What did the doctor say?" "Never mind what he said, mother dear," I answered, "Just to please you, instead of sailing next week as I intended, I will postpone my departure for another fortnight". This I did and hence sailed from Southampton on 24th July 1902.

"I hear the voice you cannot hear,
Which says I must not stay,
I see a hand you cannot see,
Which beckons me away."

So wrote Thomas Tickell and I shared his feelings.

My return trip was a very pleasant one, the third and fourth day out we ran into a little rough weather but nothing serious. On account of smallpox in Barbados we were not allowed to land there, but we did land at Trinidad. At Barbados a nice old gentleman with his wife joined our ship from one of the inter-colonial steamers; he was serving the British government as a Royal Commissioner; we had previously travelled together from Jamaica to Barbados when I was homeward bound. He told me quite a few interesting facts concerning the volcanic eruption of Mont Pele, Martinique, on 8th May 1902, which wiped out every inhabitant of St Pierre at a cost of 40,000 lives. St Pierre was undoubtedly the wickedest city in the West Indies; on Good Friday, only a few weeks before the eruption, the people publicly crucified a pig in

PANAMA PADRE

mockery of the religious services taking place in the Roman Catholic churches. They made use of brass bands accompanied by yelling and shouting so as to drown the worship within. Apparently when companies of marines were landed from warships after the eruption to bury the dead, they found a carriage and horses drawn up in front of one of the banks with a footman standing with his hand on the carriage door as though just about to open it. All seemed so real that the marines thought that the scene was of real live beings, but the moment that the marines touched the corpses they just crumbled away. My travelling companion had visited St Pierre after the eruption and had also been to St Vincent where Soufrière had simultaneously erupted and where 2,000 people had perished.

We reached Kingston, Jamaica, on a Friday and sailed again the next day, this gave me the opportunity to visit my friends the Rev and Mrs W Pratt who had been so kind to me when I was ill. Before sailing I went out to Hope Botanical Gardens and bought a quantity of plants including some young eucalyptus trees, which are always shunned by mosquitoes, to take with me to the Isthmus. Unfortunately none of the eucalyptus trees survived, perhaps our climate was too unhealthy for them; two or three of them continued a sickly existence for a few months and then succumbed. At Kingston I learned that the Isthmus was still in a very disturbed state and that there had been further fighting at Aguadulce and also in Panama Bay.

On my return to the Isthmus I was greeted with a very warm welcome and as my train reached successive stations it became increasingly embarrassing for me; for somehow the news of my arrival had travelled up the line in advance such that there were many people at the different stations waiting to shake my hand. But the climax came when I reached Culebra where some 300 to 400 people had assembled including the Alcalde (local judge) and, most embarrassing of all, a local drum and fife band specially staged for the occasion. As most of the passengers on the train were also my fellow passengers from the same steamer, I think that they must have been greatly puzzled as to whom I was and as to what all the noise was about. There was also a great demonstration of waving of flags while the amateur band struck up "Auld Lang Syne", followed by a selection of Sankey's hymns and then gave three cheers. The most amusing part of my welcome was that some of my people, knowing of my sense of humour, welcomed me home with white faces like my own. They had painted their faces with flour and water, but on account of the hot weather small rivulets of sweat trickled down their faces, the result of wiping these away rather spoiled the effect. The mirth caused by looking at each other made my homecoming a very merry occasion.

As the train pulled away, from the baggage car and the passenger carriages all heads were crowded at the windows to discover what was happening. As soon as the train was gone and I had collected my luggage of which some of my people promptly took possession, carrying it for me on their heads, I mounted the horse kindly brought for me and hoped to quietly make my escape. However, I was not to be allowed to get away so easily, for the band immediately began to follow, while my baggage carriers fell in behind followed by the crowd. Urging on my horse I tried to quicken the pace, but it was not to be, for as I approached the church the roadway, such as it was, was completely blocked with people and I had to dismount and go through the process of hand shaking again till my arm ached. On finally reaching the Mission House I found that some of my members had thoroughly cleaned it for my return while others had prepared a meal; this was a welcome sight as I had had nothing to eat since leaving the steamer at Colon in the morning and it was now after 6 p.m. But again it was not to be, for once more the sound of the band could be heard approaching; after marching around the house the band stood and played outside my veranda and cheered so that I had to go out and speak. This all lasted an hour and my dinner had long since grown cold, but that was of small account. Having at last been allowed to finish my meal, I had to go down to the church to preside at a school function. After an hour, on the plea that I was tired after my journey, I was allowed to make my escape.

Chapter 13

THE SIGNING OF THE PEACE TREATY

Instead of political affairs being better, upon my return to Culebra in August 1902, I found them much worse. Hundreds of people had abandoned their homes and gone elsewhere to seek safety, warships from the United States were patrolling both sides of the Isthmus for the protection of Americans and to keep the railroad open to traffic if necessary, meat and fish were hardly obtainable and provisions generally were scarce. The Station Agent at Culebra, in whose care my letters were always sent, had been arrested during my absence, having been accused of transmitting news to the revolutionists, and thrown into prison by the government. The revolutionists in their turn took revenge by making a raid on his successor, compelling him to hand over the keys of the Company's safe, which they ransacked, and relieving him of his personal belongings.

Soon after my return one of my members was also thrown into prison and fined four dollars; this because after I had taken a service at Frijoles he had accompanied me to Bohio station, a distance of 3½ miles, in order to bring my horse back. It was on my next visit to Frijoles that I learned what had taken place. Apparently the Alcalde at Bohio was away and in his absence his Secretary, who did not know me, assumed responsibility. It happened that he and two policemen were at Bohio station and had seen me approaching on horseback with my member accompanying me and carrying my bag. Not knowing any better they had mistaken me for one of the revolutionary leaders and inferred that the bag that my member was carrying contained ammunition. So the Secretary and the two policemen hid in the bush and did not come out of their hiding place till after my train had departed. They then accosted my member in Spanish demanding to know who I was; he told them that I was the Protestant Padre from Culebra and that I had just been taking a service in Frijoles, but they would not believe him and persisted that I was a liberal chief. Eventually my member became annoyed and answered roughly; it was on this pretext that they fined him and jailed him, but fortunately they did not keep him there for very long. As a result, next time I went to Frijoles nobody would accompany me to Bohio to bring my horse back, but they were quite willing to accompany me in the opposite direction to Tabernilla.

After over seven months absence from Culebra I found that my work had, not surprisingly, suffered considerably. Many of my people were scattered on account of the revolution, some having left the Isthmus, while others had sought refuge in the bush. Yet another problem was caused by the French Canal Company having laid off hundreds of its labourers on account of the shortage of funds, the uncertainty over the sale of the Canal concession and the difficulties created by the revolution. No supplies were allowed to be taken out of the cities of Colon and Panama for the use of the inhabitants on the line for fear of their being appropriated by the liberals, so for fresh meat we were reduced to venison and had to depend on the natives from the bush for such vegetables and fruit as they brought in for sale. Hundreds of the native huts were empty and my congregations were reduced to half. At Culebra we were again having almost nightly visits from the liberals and this was also true of some of the other towns on the line. The government had become so weak that it had to confine itself to protecting the cities of Colon and Panama where the soldiers feverishly dug trenches, threw up earthworks and erected barbed wire fences. At Culebra the liberals were actually undertaking the role of the civil government, having reopened the Court House where they were trying cases and also the prison with revolutionary soldiers acting as police.

PANAMA PADRE

As the Colombian government had clearly ceased to maintain order on the line, the United States government assumed the right to protect the railroad and keep it open to traffic under the treaty rights signed with New Grenada in 1846, another objective was to end the constant stopping and searching of passenger trains by both political parties. Hence a sufficiently large force of marines was landed from US warships to provide a guard of 100 men with machine guns for each passenger train; at the same time the Railroad Company refused to carry any more armed Colombian troops in order to avoid provoking trouble.

This was bitterly resented by General Salazar, the military Governor of Panama, as an infringement of the sovereignty of Colombia, but his protests were unavailing. Later, however, when reinforcements from Colombia arrived in Colon, a compromise was arrived at and disarmed troops to the number of 1500 were transferred across the Isthmus as ordinary passengers under the protection of the US marines in 34 cars drawn by two locomotives; a similar train composed of 38 cars carried an equal number of soldiers from Panama back to Colon. In each case their ammunition and the women attached to the companies were transported in separate trains also under the protection and guard of the US marines. At this time there were four US warships in Panama Bay and two others stationed at Colon. The reinforcements from Colombia were largely composed of boys brought from their peaceful mountain homes, probably thatched cottages and little fields. Scores were aged under ten and hundreds were under fourteen; many had never pulled a trigger in their lives and had had very little drill. The change from their healthy mountains to our low-lying malarial districts was so great that out of 2000 Colombian troops in Panama there was a death rate amongst them of from 70 to 100 a week, while in Colon where 1000 troops were stationed they were dying at the rate of from 40 to 60 a week. Smallpox and malaria were responsible for much, accelerated by insufficient food. The deaths were so numerous that coffins could not be used nor could burials take place in separate graves; instead trenches were dug and the bodies placed in rows.

In Panama City a rather amusing incident took place which might easily have been attended by serious consequences. Some car loads of ammunition for the government of Panama had arrived, but the Railroad Company refused to release the consignment until the freight charges were paid. The commanding officer sent 200 soldiers to seize the ammunition; however, to stop this some 40 US marines were promptly sent. After knocking down with the butts of their rifles some six or seven Colombians who resisted, the marines soon cleared the railroad yard of the rest. Had one shot been fired the incident may well have developed into a somewhat serious international affair. Fortunately the freight charges were duly paid and the ammunition released.

Following the influx of reinforcements the government once more stationed troops on the line to our cost. One morning I was aroused at 2.20 by the fierce barking of my dog; lighting my lantern (for it was before the days of electric light), I opened the outer door to see what was the matter. A party of government soldiers with fixed bayonets was lined up outside and according to my man they wanted to know if any of the enemy (revolutionists) had been seen. Happily it was one of those times when an imperfect knowledge of Spanish was an advantage, so I shook my head and tried to make it clear that I did not understand. Eventually they seemed to be satisfied and went away. On another occasion, having been absent at Colon for a few days, I returned to Culebra to discover between 60 and 70 soldiers quartered around and under my house which stood on piles. Many were sick, some having smallpox, but my black man and one of my deacons had resolutely refused to admit them inside the house. I at once went down to the town and after much searching found the commanding officer with his staff in the back room of a native house and made my complaint; he immediately apologised and sent his adjutant to order the removal of the troops. Bugles were blown and the men lined up and marched off elsewhere, but not before they had left the place very dirty; fires had been lit for open-air cooking and the feathers of the fowls that they had killed were blowing about everywhere. They had also dug trenches and thrown up earthworks not 50 yards from the Mission House. After their departure my man in due course developed smallpox which was unquestionably contracted from the soldiers. His proved to be a very bad case such that for two or three nights I had to be continually with him.

PANAMA PADRE

On Saturday, 1st November 1902, the prohibition against armed troops travelling on the trains was withdrawn and special trains were placed at the disposal of the Colombian government to convey well over 1000 troops from Colon and a similar number from Panama. These troops were disembarked along the line between Tabernilla at the one end and Miraflores at the other. Furthermore on Thursday, 13th November, the Colombian warship "President Marraquin" (formerly the "Ben Right") arrived with an additional 1200 men, bringing the number of the government troops on the line up to 4000. Other government warships, the "Pinzon" and the "Carthagena", both small converted vessels, were also daily expected with further reinforcements so that the protection provided by the US marines travelling on the trains was withdrawn. As the continuation of this internecine struggle was costing an appalling loss of life, a definite effort was made to bring the confrontation to an end. The government of Colombia pledged its word to grant a general amnesty to the liberal forces on condition that they laid down their arms and made a further promise of equal rights and representation with personal freedom in return for the liberals on their part agreeing to keep the peace.

On 21st November 1902 the Peace Treaty was duly signed on board the US battleship "Wisconsin" thanks to the good offices of Rear-Admiral Casey who was in command of the US naval forces on the Isthmus. General B Herrera signed on behalf of the liberals and General M Salazar, military Governor of Panama, with others, on behalf of Colombia. Thus ended the three year civil war which was estimated to have cost Colombia over 50,000 lives.



*The signing of the peace treaty on board the USS Wisconsin off the Panama coast.
Form left to right: General Victor M Salazar, General Alfredo Vazquez Cobo, Doctor Eusebio A. Morales,
General Benjamin Herrera, General Lucas Caballero.*

PANAMA PADRE

However, the end of the war did not signal the commencement of peace.

Prior to the first elections since the signing of the Peace Treaty the liberals posted notices warning the people not to vote as the government had not complied with the terms of the Treaty. The result was the usual unanimous vote for the government and a threatened return to trouble. Already one or two clashes had been reported between the government troops and insurgents involving the withdrawal of soldiers from the line and there had been a fresh outbreak of disturbances in the city of Panama. Next the military authorities rose against the state authorities; the military officers tried to capture the Governor of the city who managed to escape by taking refuge in the Consulate of the United States. They succeeded, however, in capturing the Chief of Police, the Treasurer, the Prefect, the Alcalde and other high officials and placing them in prison. After this disturbance the trouble seemed to have blown over, though there was no news coming in over the telephone lines which had probably been cut, a not uncommon event. Whisperings of secession from Colombia were on the increase. It was reported that 5000 troops from Carthagena were on the way and that preparations were being made in Colon for their reception.

Few incidents, even during the revolution, caused a greater sensation than the execution of Victoriano Lorenzo. Lorenzo was an Indian chief from the province of Penonome, in the interior of Panama. He had been acknowledged to be Governor of the Indians in the province where he lived, having been chosen by the Indians themselves; this being the right from time immemorial claimed by them and recognised by the Colombian government. At the time when the revolution broke out (1899) Lorenzo owned a large farm and was attending strictly to his own affairs, but unfortunately he was constantly annoyed by a nagging party official. This man was repeatedly warned by Lorenzo that if he persisted in annoying him, he (Lorenzo) would take steps to end the situation. These warnings were disregarded by the official who continued to stir up trouble; so Lorenzo abducted the official and carried him off into the mountains. On learning what had happened the government sent soldiers to Lorenzo's farm where they committed various acts of depredation. From that day Lorenzo took the law into his own hands and, considering himself to be an outlaw, took his revenge in true Indian fashion by committing savage atrocities on any government members or officers whom he captured. He soon enlisted quite a following and joined up with the liberal forces in carrying on a guerrilla warfare.

When the Peace Treaty was signed on board the "Wisconsin" and all hostilities ceased, a general amnesty was declared whereby all adherents to the liberal cause without exception were to be allowed to leave the country or to return to their homes unmolested. Lorenzo, feeling quite secure under this pledge, made no attempt to hide or to escape, but he was arrested and imprisoned, later making his escape while in hospital only to be recaptured the same day. A commission was sent from Bogota on 15th May 1903 to try him, upon which he was sentenced to death, the order to be carried out the same day. Public indignation was aroused and the Governor of Panama, the foreign Consuls and prominent citizens all united in appealing for a delay in the execution of the sentence to allow time to request the government in Bogota for its mitigation or a reprieve. This was refused and preparations were hastened for the execution of Lorenzo in the Plaza de Armas in Panama. Here a vast concourse of people assembled to witness his death.

As the hour approached it was said that the assembly was pervaded by an awful stillness which was only broken by the tolling of a bell and the sound of muffled drums as Lorenzo was lead forth to die. An officer then stepped forward and read aloud the following statement:

"Victoriano Lorenzo, a native of Penonome, is about to be executed for various crimes. If anyone raises his voice asking for mercy or in any manner attempts to impede the execution, he will be punished according to law."

Lorenzo was allowed to speak and, addressing the crowd he said, "Gentlemen, one word in public; you know who speaks it. Victoriano Lorenzo dies. Pardon to all. I die as Christ died". After this he was blindfolded and his arms tied, the drums rolled again and the firing party advanced. The first two files appeared to have only blank cartridges because during the first volley Lorenzo's head inclined upon his

PANAMA PADRE

breast but when the second file fired he raised it up. On the third volley his head again dropped. Victoriano Lorenzo was no more.

Lorenzo had been a popular hero with his own people and he was looked upon as a man of valour who was absolutely fearless in war. He was unassuming in manner and of a quiet disposition, but when his anger was aroused he was to be feared so that when he was reported to be on the warpath his name filled many with dread. This was partly due to the fact that he was an Indian and was accompanied by his Indian followers who had a reputation for ruthlessness and cruelty.

Chapter 14

COSTA RICA AND BOCAS DEL TORO

For some time the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society had been asking me to visit our Baptist churches in the Republic of Costa Rica and also in the town of Bocas del Toro, which is on the Atlantic coast of Panama, not far from the border with Costa Rica, as our missionaries from both places were away in England, one on sick-leave and the other on furlough. Accordingly I left Colon in mid-November 1902, just three days before the signing of the peace treaty on board the USS "Wisconsin", at a time when much of the church work on the Isthmus was paralysed on account of the revolution and the fact that we were under martial law with all night services banned. Little did I dream that so soon after my departure peace would be attained and that I should hear the good news soon after I set foot in Costa Rica.

Port Limon, Costa Rica, where I disembarked was not at that time a particularly attractive town. However, it impressed me as being decidedly superior to, and cleaner than, Colon. Limon Bay is very pretty with its island on which stands the sanatorium and convict settlement. Like Colon, much of Limon was built on land reclaimed from swamp, the shore fringed with cocoa-nut trees, the great fronds of which moved gracefully with the gentlest breath of wind. Here were some good roads much superior to those in Colon. The police were much finer men in contrast to those on the Isthmus where the manhood of the country had been drained to supply soldiers for the civil war. One could not but be impressed by the contrast between a country given up to industry and peaceful pursuits and the Isthmus bled white by revolution; another thing which impressed me was that in the vicinity of Limon the country was under cultivation, whereas at Colon it was all low-lying swamp.

The principal railroad runs between Limon and San José, the capital, a distance of 112 miles; it passes through some magnificent scenery and over bridges spanning gorges at a dizzy height. In San José I was shown the theatre which had cost the government three million Costa Rican dollars (US\$1.25 million) and which was considered to be the fourth finest theatre in the world; a typical example of the misuse of public money by a small republic. It was unquestionably a magnificent edifice built of the most exquisite marble with ceilings and walls covered with beautiful paintings made by famous artists who had been specially brought from Italy for the purpose; the gilt work and mirrors were superb, and this in a country frequently shaken by earthquakes. At the time of my visit the state exchequer had not recovered from the blow. Hence some of the work on the new railroad had had to be suspended and roads, poor enough at best, were sadly neglected. For all goods landed in the country the importers were obliged to pay a special theatre tax to help pay for this costly luxury, the white elephant of the Government.

One day I went by train to Juan Vinas and from there took horse to visit some brothers named Ernst, with one of whom I had been at school in Great Britain; they owned a large ranch on which they grew coffee and sugar cane. We visited part of the ranch on horseback and part of it on foot; going through some sugar-cane plantations we came upon the newly made footprints of a jaguar showing clearly on the soft earth quite near to the house. Evidently the tiger found that the sugar-cane provided a happy hunting ground as well as providing excellent cover. In the distance we saw the volcano of Turrialba, also another volcano in close proximity; the one ejecting smoke and the other belching hot water.

During my 28 days in Costa Rica I conducted 24 services and undertook a good deal of visiting and other work. I had made all my arrangements with a view to returning to Colon on the 17th December 1902.

PANAMA PADRE

As, unfortunately, there was no direct steamer to the Isthmus, I anticipated having to go via Carthagena and Savanilla in mainland Colombia, a rather round-about way to reach Colon which would require a week, whereas a direct trip would have meant little more than 24 hours. Apparently there was no help for it, so during the morning of the 17th I went to the shipping office in Port Limon in order to purchase my ticket for sailing the same day, only to be asked by the booking clerk if I would mind returning a little later as the steamer was only then coming in and there was always the possibility of her being quarantined and, hence, not being allowed to embark any passengers. On returning to the Mission House for breakfast, someone said to me, "A gasoline launch has just arrived from Bocas del Toro and will be returning there in two or three hours time". "Then", I said, "if she is going direct to Bocas and will take me, I will go in her".

I collected my baggage and went on board ready for the sixty mile voyage. There were sixteen passengers, all coloured with the exception of myself, crowded into a little open launch only 20 feet long and 7 feet 6 inches beam. Minor Keith, the manager of the United Fruit Company's interests, including banana farms, in Costa Rica, is reported to have said, "The first time that a man makes the trip between Port Limon and Bocas del Toro in an open launch he is a hero, the second time he is a fool". At about two or three in the morning we were caught by a severe squall; there was a torrential downpour of rain and everyone was soaked to the skin, the engine had to be stopped and we all had to lend a hand in baling out the water in order to keep the little craft afloat. It was inky dark and, as our boat lay pitching and tossing in the swell, we could hear the surf breaking on the coral reefs of the uninhabited coast not more than 400 yards away. Was it to be our last resting place? But the squall blew over, the rain ceased and our boatman was able to restart his engine.

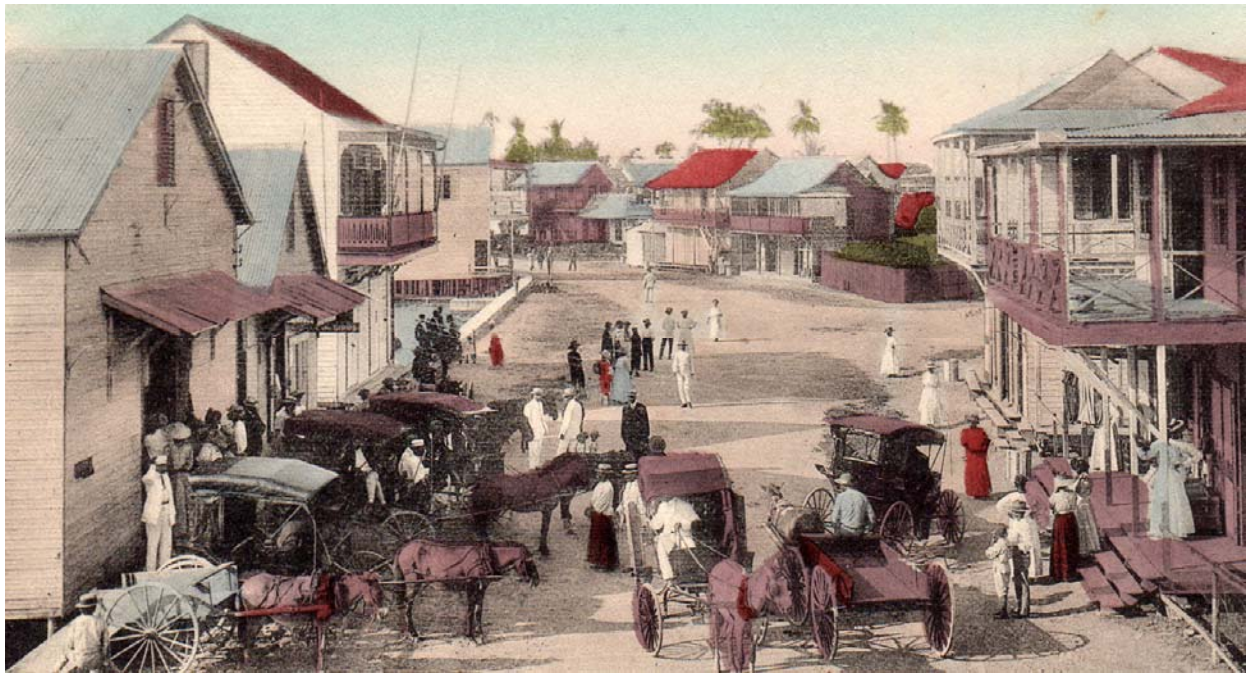
We reached the town of Bocas del Toro, Panama, at 5 a.m. on the 18th December 1902, but the government official who was responsible for allowing us to land did not awaken till 8 a.m. and, as he must not be disturbed, for three hours we had to lie off, not a stone's throw from his bedroom window. How I sympathised with Job. Seeing a passing cayuca (dug-out canoe) with an old negro in it, I asked one of the men in our launch if he knew the old man; I was told that he was Uncle Sam, the caretaker of the Baptist church, so I hailed him and told him who I was and what I had come for. The old fellow at once rowed off to make all preparation for my landing. As the local missionary, the Rev EC Notman, was absent on furlough in England and the friend to whom he had entrusted the key of the Mission House was some 20 miles up the Chiriqui Lagoon at Almirante, there was no choice but to break the lock of the Mission House door; after a sleepless night on the gasoline launch I had to have somewhere to sleep.

Before leaving the Mission House to go and conduct the evening service in Bocas del Toro, I was careful to pull a heavy chair as close to the door as possible, allowing barely enough room to withdraw my hand as I closed the door. Imagine my surprise on returning after the service, accompanied by an old deacon, to find the door easily opened and that the chair had been removed; as we were commenting on it I heard strange noises upstairs and so called out, "Who is there?", but there was no answer though the question was repeated three times. With the aid of a lantern we started to go upstairs to investigate, when to our astonishment we saw at the top of the narrow staircase a madman, well known in the district, who was allowed to be at large as in Bible days, for asylums in Panama at that time were unknown. He was flourishing a machete and daring anyone to come up; to the lasting credit of the old deacon, be it said, he made a sudden dash up the stairs and disarmed the man relieving him of his machete before he could do any harm. Warning him that if he gave any further trouble he would be handed over to the police, we turned him out and refused to return his machete for the time. After this episode it was not a pleasant experience to sleep alone in the house without a lock or bolt on the door, so before I retired I pushed the dining room table against the door. I had no further trouble, although a night or two later he came into the church, while I was conducting a service, and started to create a disturbance, so that I had to go down from the pulpit and assist him outside.

To realise what Bocas is like one has to think of Venice without the canals and the stately Palace of the Doge. Bocas is the Venice of the New World, having been built on islands and partly over the water on

PANAMA PADRE

piles, but instead of the splendour of Venice there is a great collection of wooden buildings, many of them somewhat dilapidated. Our Sunday services were very crowded and I was glad to be able to gather the people together during my friend Notman's absence. He and his good wife undertook fine work here and were much beloved by the people. I was able to visit his church at Careening Cay, one of several islands which form the Bocas group and the island where Christopher Columbus, in 1502 during his third voyage of discovery (that of 1502-1504), and the old buccaneers used to beach their vessels in order to clean the hulls of barnacles. Here also our service was interrupted by the visit of another lunatic who had to be taken outside before the service could proceed; nowhere else have I seen so many madmen at large as I saw during my short stay at Bocas. Making use of a gasoline launch I visited the island of Old Bank where there had been considerable fighting between the government troops and the revolutionists; I found most of the homes to be vacated as well as riddled with bullet holes.



First Street, Bocas Del Toro.

After five busy and happy days I left Bocas on a little sloop not very much larger than the gasoline launch by which I had arrived. She was bound for Colon laden down with cargo almost to the gunwales, there being no plimsoll line, even the deck was crowded with empty casks and the passengers had to accommodate themselves as best they could on top; once more I was the only buchra (white man) on board. Aided by the current and strong wind we made the trip to Colon in 21½ hours, not bad going for 160 miles. Apart from being repeatedly drenched by seas that broke over us, for our starboard was under water all the time, and running foul of two other sloops as we were entering Colon harbour so that their rigging became entangled in ours, our trip was uneventful. It was good to be back on the Isthmus again and in time to celebrate Christmas there.

Fifteen months later, on Tuesday 1st March 1904, I left Culebra to return to Bocas del Toro by invitation of my friend the Rev EC Notman in order to conduct some special services. I embarked at Colon in a small schooner, on board of which there was a motley crowd of negroes, Chinese and others; men,

PANAMA PADRE

women and children all huddled together, without any sanitary arrangements, amongst the casks, boxes and bales which crowded the deck - not unlike the old slave ships of olden days. This time there was another white man for company, a Belgian doctor of law who had lived for some years in the Congo but who had now become a director of a banana company. He was both intelligent and gentlemanly and soon we were conversing about the Belgian administration in the Congo, rubber and missionaries, concerning all of which he was well informed. When I spoke of Gilchrist, one of our Baptist missionaries in the Congo, the Belgian took out of his pocket a photograph of him saying that he knew him well. It seemed strange that on a little coastal schooner 5000 miles away from England we should meet and be able to mention names familiar to both of us.

After a voyage of 42 hours our little schooner reached Bocas. I cannot say that I enjoyed the journey for there was neither privacy nor anything else on board that crowded boat and, though I had paid extra fare for the use of a bunk, of which there were only two, I never once went below deck; what was bad above was infinitely worse beneath. On arrival at Bocas I at once made my way to the Mission House of my friends, the Notmans, from whom I received a warm welcome. It was a real pleasure to meet my friends again; but little did I imagine, however, that our plans were to be completely upset.

I had not long retired for the night when there came a knock at my door and Notman said, "Loveridge, I think the town is on fire; see the lurid light in the sky and hear the dogs?" Everywhere dogs were barking, a sure indication that something was wrong. So after dressing quickly we made our way into the town which is long and straggling and might be described as having three parts, yet all connected. The centre, or commercial part, where all the shops, stores and offices were located was entirely destroyed by the fire, whilst the two wings, composed mostly of dwelling houses, huts and cabins, escaped the conflagration. When the fire broke out there was not so much as a fire appliance, hose or extinguisher to combat the flames; there were a few old hoses but these were so riddled with holes that when they were unwound they were found to be useless. It was a never-to-be-forgotten sight, the fierceness of the flames as roof after roof and building after building fell into the burning furnace that had a length of from one third to half a mile. After ascending the staircase of one building in search of one of Mr Notman's members, only to find that both mother and baby had already removed to a place of safety, we sought to be of use elsewhere. However we found that soldiers and police, armed with cutlasses and rifles, were breaking into stores, where they fortified themselves with drink, and then with drawn cutlasses were terrifying all whom they met, wounding one or two and making a general nuisance of themselves, doing far more harm than good.

Providentially, far out at sea the lurid sky was observed from a German warship; sensing that something was seriously wrong, her Commander had her make all possible speed towards the burning town. On arrival of the vessel a force of marines was immediately landed and the Commander requested permission to be allowed to blow up some of the buildings that were in the path of the advancing flames, but this was promptly refused. However, permission was afterwards granted after much precious time and many more buildings had been lost, whereupon the marines broke down and blew up many buildings which were in the path of the oncoming fire. That the fire was eventually extinguished and the rest of the town saved was entirely due to the Commander of the warship and the fine discipline and training of the marines.

Though all the time there was no breeze, the fire was so fierce that the sparks were carried on to the roofs of houses on another island half a mile away. Whilst the fire was steadily approaching the Rev Notman's church we decided to go into the building and remove what we could. As the cupboard containing the communion cups and plates was locked, I broke it open and removed the contents including a collecting box containing some money, also the pulpit bible and hymn book; this being my second act of "burglary" at Bocas. We then returned to the Mission House to sleep as it was nearly dawn. At about 8 a.m. there was a knock at the front door, it was one of Mr Notman's deacons. "Minister", he said, addressing my friend, "God Almighty in His great goodness would not allow His churches to be burnt", a reference to the Methodist church as well as our own, for they were not far apart, "but Minister, could you believe it, some mean low down dirty thief broke into the communion cupboard and stole the communion cups and plates, also the

PANAMA PADRE

pulpit hymn book and bible". The old man seemed almost inconsolable, but when a moment later Mr Notman and I produced the missing goods the old man's confusion after what he had said was really amusing. Plans were immediately made for temporarily housing the homeless, numbering some 500, in the churches, but this proved to be unnecessary as most of them soon found accommodation with friends.

The disaster completely stopped our plans for the holding of special services because, many having lost their homes, possessions and employment, people's minds were far too disturbed to attend meetings. However, Mr Notman had several branch churches and day schools at Almirante and other places on the lagoons, some of which we visited. Everywhere I found he and his wife to be held in the greatest respect and esteem for the excellent work that they were doing. In company with Mr Notman I again visited Careening Cay and also visited the Chiriqui Lagoon; going out to sea in one of the steamers of the United Fruit Company it was a couple of hours before we reached the entrance of the Lagoon and a little later we arrived at Chiriqui Grande. The Lagoon is immense, being some 33 miles in length and 14 in breadth. While the ship was loading with bananas we strolled through the native village where, to my astonishment, I met a woman from my Frijoles church; a little later another spoke to me who had known me at Colon. Leaving Chiriqui Grande we next stopped at Cricamola (both names being Indian in origin) where we loaded more fruit. From here it was our intention to return to Bocas but, finding to our surprise and pleasure that one of the launches of the Fruit Company was just leaving for the Changuinola Canal, we decided to abandon ship and take advantage of the opportunity to make use instead of the canal route which runs through dense tropical swamp and jungle.

It was 7 a.m. so we climbed on top of the awning of the gasoline launch, the better to enjoy the scenery through which the canal runs. After passing through nine miles of the canal we reached another lagoon and from there entered the Changuinola River, broad and deep and flowing through glorious tropical scenery. Another four miles brought us to the banana plantation just in time for an 11 o'clock breakfast for which we were more than ready. At 12 noon we boarded a work train that was going out to the plantation itself; riding the two miles each way on the footplate we returned just in time to join the Superintendent who was returning to Bocas del Toro in his private launch. We finally arrived at Bocas del Toro just before dark. At most of the places where we had stopped some of the coloured people spoke to me; many had left the Isthmus due to hard times on account of so much of the Panama Canal work being shut down, they had come to Bocas to find employment on the plantations where the United Fruit Company employs over 6000 men. At Bocas I was introduced to the "Banana King" of the United Fruit Company, a millionaire; he had arrived at Bocas from Costa Rica on a special steamer of several thousand tons capacity which was waiting to take him back again.

On Saturday, 12th March 1904, I was to leave on my return trip to Colon in the schooner "Herald" but, with vivid memories still fresh in my mind of my not too pleasant outward journey, any other means of travelling would be welcome. Learning that a United States cruiser was about to leave the same afternoon from the Chiriqui Lagoon for the Isthmus, my friend Mr Notman approached the US Consul who kindly gave us a note to her Commander. We left Bocas with Mr JM Kyes, the local Manager of the United Fruit Company who was also travelling to Colon, in a special launch provided by the Company. From Bocas to the other end of the Lagoon where the cruiser was anchored was a three hour journey, so we left at 11.30 a.m., that we might reach her by 2.30 p.m., as she was due to sail at 3.00 p.m. But alas, when we still had some distance to go our launch ran hard and fast on a coral reef and it took some considerable time before we were able, with all of us helping, to refloat her. On finally going on board the cruiser, her Commander received us very kindly, but to our disappointment we learned that the vessel could not possibly depart before the following afternoon; however there would be a torpedo destroyer leaving at daybreak next morning and we could travel by her if we liked. This offer was gladly accepted.

Leaving the cruiser we went ashore and found accommodation at a banana plantation which was half a mile away. Awake and up at 3.30 a.m. the next day, we had coffee at 4.00 and left in an open boat in order to join the US Navy destroyer. It was a decided benefit to be able to make the trip to Colon in 16

PANAMA PADRE

hours instead of 42 and to enjoy one's early morning cup of tea and breakfast with the Commander in his cosy little cabin.

To see Colon once more and to be able to return to my own work after an absence of just twelve days was again, to me, welcome.

Chapter 15

FOLLOWING THE BUCCANEERS

Soon after my first trip to Bocas del Toro in December 1902 I was delighted to receive in Culebra Mr WP Livingstone, the Correspondent for the West Indies and Central America of The Times newspaper, London. Mr Livingstone is better known to many as the author of "Mary Slessor" and "Christina Forsyth". He came with introductions from some well known friends and it was a great pleasure to meet him; I was able to take him around and show him something of the Canal work as well as to introduce him to some of the officials of the French Canal Company. He was particularly interested in all that concerned the moral and social conditions and the welfare of the people as well as the future prospects of the Canal; furthermore he was able to take quite a number of photographs. He later spent several days with me at the Mission House, during which time I arranged to take him for a trip down the Chagres River. This was something that I had long wanted to undertake but, on account of the revolution and other causes, it had not been possible. Now, however, with the assistance of my faithful deacon, Henry Clarke, I was able to secure the services of a boatman and his cayuca (dug-out canoe) to take Mr Livingstone, Henry Clarke and myself the thirty-odd miles down the river to Colon. This journey was being made in the reverse order to that of Sir Henry Morgan and his buccaneers. Starting at its mouth they ascended the river to reach Cruces, or Las Cruces, (Venta Cruz was its former name) which is associated with the earliest Isthmian history, whereas we started three miles downstream from Cruces to descend the river.

Mr Livingstone and I took the early morning train to Matachin, there to embark on our river journey. The first part of the trip was particularly thrilling on account of the numerous rocks, both submerged and visible, that we had to avoid, to say nothing of sandbars and rapids that we had to shoot. Altogether I counted some 14 crocodiles, large and small, sunning themselves on the banks or on sloping rocks in the river as we passed. In early days the Chagres used to be known by the name of the Rio Lagartoe (Alligator River), for crocodiles were plentiful and, though since reduced in numbers, are still plentiful. The village of Ahorca Lagarto on the bank of the Chagres River, but later submerged in the Gatun Lake, no doubt owed its name to the same source. The name alligator is universally applied in Central America to what is in reality a crocodile, just as the jaguar is always spoken of as a tiger. The birds and other wild life that we saw were equally interesting. After two or three hours of paddling the river both broadened and deepened, but we still had to be constantly on the look-out for floating trees and submerged stumps that might foul our fragile craft. Due to the narrowness of the canoe we had to sit the whole ten hours in the same cramped positions, exposed to the merciless rays of the scorching sun which was beating down on our heads and blistering our skins. Reaching Mindi we passed into the French Canal channel and so continued our journey to the landing bank at Folks River, Colon. It was just dark as we arrived, the sun having set about ten minutes before; for twilight as we know it in Great Britain is unknown in the tropics.

As we approached our landing place we heard the sound of a policeman's whistle, then another and another, till in a few minutes, upon landing, we had at least half a dozen policemen standing around us and all speaking Spanish, to which our boatman replied. It appeared that some of the regulations that existed during the revolution were still in force such that no one was allowed to land after dark. Hence, escorted by six policemen the four of us were taken to the police station there to give an account of ourselves and to explain how we came to be landing after dark. The Teniente (Captain) at the desk asked many questions

PANAMA PADRE

which our boatman, acting as interpreter, answered. We were treated with the utmost courtesy, although at one time it looked as though we were all going to be detained for the night. However, when our boatman abruptly explained that I was the Inglese Padre at Culebra, that did the trick and Mr Livingstone and I were released. On learning, however, that we were not going to be allowed to take our suitcases with us as there was a regulation against anyone carrying a parcel or anything after dark, I explained through our boatman that as our suitcases contained our night things we must take them with us. This difficulty was overcome by the Teniente instructing a Vigilante (Lieutenant) to accompany us to our hotel to protect us from further molestation. Then I found that they were still intending to retain Henry Clarke and our boatman, so we refused to go unless they too were released. Eventually we made our way to a leading Spanish hotel which was supposed to be the best, apart from the American Hotel Washington where I had previously always stayed whilst in Colon; but we were hungry and tired and the Washington was nearly a mile further on. On parting from our escort, the Vigilante, I wanted to slip a small gratuity into his hand for having accompanied us, but with dignity he declined.

After completing our evening meal we retired for the night, but not to sleep. I shall never forget that night, for hardly had I blown out my candle and tucked in my mosquito net to try and keep out these small pests than I was assailed by another foe, compared with which the mosquitoes were but mild. I was encountered by an invasion of a different kind such as I had never experienced before; these new visitors came from inside the top of the mosquito net in an endless stream as well as seeming to appear from everywhere else. The mosquito net that night seemed to be a second Jacob's ladder, only instead of angels ascending and descending, there were bugs, bugs, bugs; enough to supply a small Noah's ark. Although we occupied different rooms, neither Mr Livingstone nor I closed our eyes that night in sleep, how we longed for the coming of the day.



The village of Cruces, Panama.

PANAMA PADRE

The village of Cruces, which is 34 miles from the mouth of the Chagres River, after the river was in 1534 made navigable for light draft vessels, was the highest point up the river to which boats could ascend. Here small vessels used to come and unload their cargoes which were transported by mule trains and on the heads of Indians along a cobbled highway, El Camino Real or Las Cruces Trail, which ran through 18 miles of jungle to Old Panama, some seven miles to the north-east of what is now Panama City. The remains of this old trail are still to be seen, though much of it is hidden beneath the dense undergrowth of the jungle. When once making a journey on horseback over a portion of it, my man and I came upon a number of graves, perhaps of villagers executed by soldiers, close to the trail and not far from the hamlet of Tigre. What interested me was that many of the graves had a human skull placed on top of the mound, the reason for which I do not know. The old highway is said to have been built by order of Francisco Pizarro, the conqueror of the Incas of Peru, and once ran from Old Panama, of which some of the ruins still remain, to Porto Bello (now known as Portobelo) on the Atlantic coast. Along this trail the Spaniards would compel the Indians to carry their loot from Peru, gold and jewels in such quantities as would be unimaginable. The highway continued to be used until the railroad opened in 1855. In 1572 Francis Drake captured both Porto Bello and Nombre de Dios and it was near to Cruces that Drake (known to the Spanish as "The master thief of the unknown world") made his bootless capture of the Spanish plate train on the night of 14th February 1573; later, in 1596, Drake died of fever and was buried at sea one mile off Porto Bello. Buccaneer Morgan reached Cruces with 1200 men in 1671; Morgan expected to find both food and shelter, only to discover that the Spaniards had set fire to all their houses before departing, sparing only the King's stables and store-houses, but leaving nothing behind to eat. Alexander Olivier Esquemeling, a Dutchman and one of Morgan's own party, gives a full account of his experiences at Cruces in his book, "The Buccaneers of America", published in 1684. Those were dark days often filled with cruel deeds.

A few words about Sir Henry Morgan are not amiss here. Morgan was born in Wales in about 1635 but was kidnapped as a boy at Bristol and was sold at Barbados. He soon joined the marine, that is the buccaneers, in Jamaica and is believed to have commanded his first ship at the age of 28 years; just three years later, in 1666, he was promoted from Captain to Admiral. In this capacity he captured Puerto Principe and the well garrisoned town of Porto Bello in 1668 and Maracaibo in 1669; following these bloody attacks he was made Commander-in-Chief of all naval forces in Jamaica. The next major exploit was Morgan's successful attack of Old Panama in 1671 but, as this attack took place after the signing of a peace treaty between the English and the Spaniards, Morgan was sent to England in 1672 for trial. What with Morgan using his wealth in nefarious ways and the British wanting Morgan as a friend, not as a foe, the result of the trial was the return of Morgan to Jamaica where, in 1674, he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor by King Charles II and was knighted for his services. Morgan died in 1688 and was buried at the Palisadoes, Port Royal, Jamaica; he was not a pirate, his brutality as a buccaneer was no different to the behaviour of the Spaniards and was acceptable in those bloodthirsty times.

The origins of the word "buccaneer" are of interest. The buccaneers copied the Indian method of smoke-drying meat; the Indians called the grill a boucan, this became a French word meaning grill for drying meat and later meaning dried meat. Hence, the buccaneers were named after their method of drying meat.

On several occasions I have taken friends to see the village of Cruces. It was within easy reach by dug-out canoe from Matadin, but much more difficult to locate by jungle trail as I learned to my cost. The church at Cruces is built of wood and was erected on the site of a former stone building which was destroyed by earthquake during September 1882. When I first visited the church I found it in a much neglected condition, only being used for services about one week in the year. Beneath the roof inside, hung literally hundreds of bats, many of them vampires, which appeared to enjoy undisputed possession of the place; I have often seen numerous bats hanging from the roofs of some other buildings, but nowhere have I seen such swarms of them as I saw at Cruces. The floor was covered with their guano several inches deep. Lying face downwards in this dirt were six or seven life-sized figures, crudely carved out of wood, which had all

PANAMA PADRE

the appearance of once having been the figureheads that adorned the bows of wooden ships of a century ago; mermaids and angels, now transformed into saints, but with their back portions still uncarved just as they were fitted into the bows of ships. When it was known that a priest was coming on his annual visit, the natives would become busy and clean out the church, washing the fallen saints in the River Chagres or with buckets of water on the spot. As soon as the priest arrived the village would give itself up to a week's fiesta; religious processions, services, christenings of babies (most of whom were born out of wedlock, for marriages were rarely observed), feasting, dancing and drunkenness were the chief characteristics of the celebrations. After the priest's departure the village would return to its normal life.

Outside the church, suspended from a cross pole, hung three old bells of great antiquity, one of which was minus a piece. There were also two famous old anchors, each having a 14 foot shank, one located 300 yards from the river and the other in the bush some 400 yards away. Both must at one time have been brought up the river with the intention of transporting them over the Cruces trail to Old Panama. At Cruces the Spaniards would sometimes beach their caravels and, with the assistance of forced labour, dismantle them, taking them apart timber from timber. By means of Indian chain gangs the timbers and rigging of the ships would be transported to Old Panama where the ships would be rebuilt for use on the Pacific. This probably is the explanation of the presence of the old anchors as well as the wooden bowsprit images in the church. What had happened concerning the anchors probably will never be known, but there is an old legend that says that while 40 Indians were engaged in carrying one of the anchors, one of their number stumbled and fell; the others being unable to stand the weight let the anchor drop killing seven of them. The Indians were then too terrified to have anything more to do with the anchors, so that they were abandoned where they lay; this place being known as Matasieta (Spanish for "Seven dead"). After two or three centuries in the bush these anchors have since been removed to Mount Hope where they repose in the yard of the general store-keeper. In 1910 Cruces consisted of some sixty houses built in the usual native style with thatched roofs and bamboo walls; however, in 1913 the village had to be abandoned on account of the flooding due to the new artificial Gatun Lake raising the water level. With the disappearance of Cruces under the rising waters, some of the traces of the old buccaneers also, alas, disappeared.

One experience that will long live in my memory is that of my visit to Balboa Hill which is also known as Cerro Grande. The hill is two miles from Gorgona and is located nearly half way across the Isthmus; from the summit which is at an altitude of 1000 feet can be seen, on a clear day, both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It was from here that the first European, Vasco Nunez de Balboa, set eyes on the Pacific Ocean on 25th September 1513. I had often wished to make this climb but had been unwilling to spare the time. However, early one morning, having had some matters of business to attend to at Gorgona and having two hours to spare before my return train I resolved to make the attempt. At the time it seemed futile as a drenching mist hung like a great pall over everything, but I decided that I would risk it; so I took the mountain trail and pushed my way through the undergrowth, becoming fairly soaked in so doing. It was not till I was within a few feet of the top that all of a sudden the blanket of mist lifted and the sun as suddenly shone out in all its glory. I looked away to the north-west and there stretched out before me in the distance was the Atlantic Ocean with ships sailing on its bosom; turning suddenly round I looked south-east and this time I saw the Pacific Ocean. I cannot forget the thrill that it gave me, to be able to gaze on both oceans almost simultaneously. I was prompted to think of those lines by Charles Wesley,

"Lo! on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbound seas I stand;
Yet how insensible!"

Chapter 16

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

My occasional trips away from the Isthmus had not hindered my church work, indeed I was able to witness a real spiritual awakening. When it is remembered that at this time hundreds of the French Canal employees were being laid off through lack of work and there was uncertainty concerning the future of the Canal; that fifty per cent of my congregation had left the Isthmus to seek employment elsewhere; that hundreds of the huts and camp buildings in which the people lived were now standing empty, the revival was all the more remarkable. Sunday by Sunday our church buildings were crowded out. That not a Sunday passed without some believers registering their decision to follow Jesus Christ, and others coming forward at the week-night meetings for the same purpose only made the movement the more astonishing; within one fortnight 17 new enquirers applied for baptism. But, perhaps most interesting of all, this applied also to payday Sunday, the day on which all employees received their money from the French Canal Company. A full church on payday Sunday was something previously unheard of and believed to be impossible; on this day too our buildings were crowded. On one payday Sunday, accompanied by a number of my people, I paid a visit to the Rio Grande market where we held an open-air meeting at 8.00 a.m. It was the busiest time and we had taken up our position in the very centre with the result that we soon collected such a crowd that all buying and selling came to a complete standstill and for over an hour no business was conducted. I think that some of the buyers and sellers who knew better must have felt rather uncomfortable about trading on a Sunday. At that time we were holding two or three open-air meetings every Sunday, in addition to the regular services held in the church and similar services held down the line. Open-air work is possible in the dry season but is very difficult in the wet.

One typical Sunday I began work with a baptismal service at Frijoles in the river at 5.30 a.m. and conducted a preaching service at 7.30 which was followed by a communion service at 8.30. Taking the 9 o'clock train back to Culebra, 20 miles away, I preached there at 11.00 a.m. to a large congregation; I then rode, accompanied by 150 to 200 of my Culebra congregation on foot, three miles to another village in order to conduct an open-air service. Returning home to Culebra I conducted the evening service at 7.00 p.m. On another Sunday I was up at 3.30 a.m., had an early cup of tea at 4.00 and went down to the Culebra church where a prayer meeting, conducted by two of my teachers, had been in progress for an hour. At 5.00 a.m. I dismissed the congregation and, led by my two deacons and the two teachers, a procession consisting of 400 to 500 people was formed to go to the Rio Grande lagoon over a mile away where a baptismal service was to take place. At the waterside the company had increased to over 1000 people; after an address I baptised 17 candidates and the service closed at 7.15 a.m. I went home for breakfast and returned to the church for a wedding at 9.45; as soon as the wedding was over the church was full again for the 11 o'clock morning service which was followed by a communion service at 12.30. At 1.30 p.m. I returned to my Mission House for a hasty lunch prior to leaving in the saddle at 2.00 p.m. for Empire, a mile and a half away, there to take another service. On my return to Culebra, custom demanded that I should pay a visit to the newly wedded; after which it was back to the church for the evening service. All this would be a full day's work even for a minister in a cooler climate. The linen used during such a day would amount to three shirts, three collars and four handkerchiefs; all soaked with perspiration and making a considerable laundry load. During Easter 1903 I conducted four services on Good Friday, two on the Saturday and six on Easter Monday; at that time

PANAMA PADRE

there were 33 enquirers awaiting baptism.

At Matachin I always held our baptismal services in the Chagres River and amongst the candidates for baptism were two or three particularly interesting cases. One was that of a man who, while ill in hospital, determined to end his misery by taking his own life. Somehow he managed to enter the mortuary and there pounded three bottles into fine glass preparatory to mixing it with his own food and so to end his days; just as he was about to take this mixture he had, as he told me later, an awful revelation of hell and God's wrath and punishment descending on him. He then and there gave himself to God and speedily recovered; on his discharge from hospital he sought to make good his repentance by applying for church membership and baptism.

Another case was that of a poor old man who was bed-ridden and helpless due to paralysis; he lived in a tiny hut that hardly held his cot (a piece of canvas stretched between two longitudinal poles supported by cross legs in the form of an X at both ends). For a table he had a box with four strips of wood nailed one in each corner to do duty as legs and for a chair he had another box. The hut was made of old kerosene tins hammered flat and nailed onto a wooden frame; it had a very low roof and the temperature inside by day seldom could have been less than 100 degrees F. To this hut, at the close of Sunday school, my Matachin teachers had been taking their scholars and, surrounding the hut, would sing hymns while one or, at the most, two teachers, for more could not possibly have entered at a time, would go in and pray with the poor man. The outcome was that he was glad to yield his heart to God and, when I visited him, he astonished me by saying, "Minister, I want to be baptised". As I looked at him, a poor helpless wreck of humanity, I said, "But you know that there are other things that come before baptism; we have to seek the forgiveness of our sins and accept Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour". He replied saying how he had been led along this path through the instrumentality of the visits of the Sunday school teachers and scholars. Once more he repeated, "Minister, I want to be baptised". Again I looked upon his poor helpless body and said, "But I do not think that God would either ask or expect you to be baptised in your helpless condition". I then felt reproved as, pointing to an old and well worn Bible by his cot side, he said, "Minister, it is there; it is there and I want to obey". I replied, "Well, we will think it over and see what can be done", and turning to my deacon Henry Clarke, who was standing nearby, I said, "Henry I want you and some of the other deacons to come and visit our friend and give him further instruction in God's word".

Not long afterwards this poor man was brought from his sick bed to the side of the Chagres River for our baptismal service; he was seated on a pony and supported by two strong men, one on either side. When his turn came, being unable to walk or stand, he was carried out into the river in the strong arms of the two men and I baptised him in the swiftly flowing stream. I shall never forget the look of heavenly joy on his face afterwards because God had permitted him in this simple way to obey his Saviour's command. On a Sunday some weeks later, two strong men carried him into our Matachin church where I was conducting a service and there, for the first and only time in his life, he received the Lord's supper in remembrance of our Saviour's death. It was some six months later that I returned to lay his poor body to rest beneath the oleander shrubs and waving palm trees. The light on his face still haunts me as I recall his sheer joy at being enabled to obey his Saviour's command.

An interesting case of conversion was that of a notorious character known locally as "The King of Sodom" because of his evil life. He was a big burly negro and for some time had been the leader of a gang that took a special delight in resisting authority and annoying the police. This man repeatedly applied to me for church membership but, seeing no sign of repentance or change of heart, I as often refused, pointing out to him that he must "bring forth fruit worthy of repentance" for nothing but a complete change of character and life would be acceptable to God. Eventually my insistence appeared to have borne some fruit and the man began to show many signs of genuine repentance and the desire to live a new and better life. After some months of probation, I baptised him and received him into the church; from that time on he lived a new and changed life.

My time was also devoted, both on Sundays and weekdays, to the many constant demands of trying

PANAMA PADRE

to smooth out domestic differences between husbands and wives; how often one felt the need for the wisdom of Solomon to deal with some of these cases.

Feeling the need of increased accommodation for our Culebra congregation, I purchased yet another old house and called upon the church members to assist in pulling it down and, with the lumber thus obtained, to further enlarge the original building. We raised the gable roof at one end and constructed two new vestries outside, at the same time demolishing the old vestry within, thus allowing more space inside. Having accomplished this we gave the whole building a new coat of whitewash; this was, as before, all undertaken with voluntary labour.

Another purchase that I made was that of an old rum shop. For some time I had been wanting to extend my work at Paraiso where already I had two or three members, but lacked a building in which to hold services. However, I heard of an old derelict rum shop being empty and for sale at Paraiso; on enquiry I found that the owner was willing to part with it for the munificent sum of US\$50 (£10) and, having just received a gift of half that amount, I closed the deal. So one Saturday, accompanied by nine of my members, I went to Paraiso to take possession of the property and to commence work thereon. We knocked down the four partitions that divided the building into as many rooms thus throwing it all open into one. With a little alteration the old rum counter was transformed into a serviceable platform, a better use than that to which it had been assigned before. After a full day one Sunday, which included the taking of anniversary services at Colon, I left Colon by the first train on Monday morning for Culebra where I had a hurried breakfast, mounted my horse and rode the four miles to Paraiso, having to cross the bed of the Canal en route. At Paraiso I found seven of my men from Culebra who had been at work since 6.00 a.m; tethering my horse outside, I too was soon busy. From the partitions that had divided the building into rooms we constructed seats out of the boards. The alterations did not take many days to complete and it was not long before the building was duly whitewashed; the old rum shop, now properly converted, opened for divine worship on Sunday, 8th November 1903.

One Sunday afternoon I was conducting a funeral service in Panama City Cemetery over the body of a coloured woman; in the tropics funerals usually take place on the day of death, although by law it has to be within 24 hours, hence funerals occur on Sunday just the same as any other day. There must have been some 300 people at the graveside and, while I was reading part of the committal service, someone, it afterwards turned out to be a child, threw a small package wrapped with newspaper onto the coffin. At once everything was thrown into confusion, I think that I was about the only one present who remained undisturbed; the native grave-diggers refused to proceed with the interment, they demanded that the offender should at once be arrested and taken to jail till the alcalde could try the case for a terrible insult had been committed against the dead. It was just again a piece of old African superstition that the "dead could not rest easy" after such an insult had taken place. I refused to allow any arrest to be made and insisted upon order at once being restored; this I obtained, but the spirit of the service was gone because everybody's mind was full of the mysterious incident that had just taken place. Having pronounced the benediction I made one of the grave-diggers pick up and open the package in the presence of all the assembled; the package revealed a simple wet rag with which the body of the deceased had been wiped. Apparently it was customary to enclose such rags in the coffin, though it was the first time that I had heard it, and as the person who was responsible could not think of this omission being allowed to happen, a child was sent to throw the rag in the grave. So slow to die are the customs and superstitions of centuries.

To give a picture of daily life in the city I recorded the following incidents which all occurred during one afternoon in Colon where I was spending a few days engaged in my work. It was a very hot sultry afternoon and I was sitting near an open window, which overlooked the road, and was trying to prepare a sermon; during this time the following distractions all took place.

- 1) In a building 200 yards away a woman was flogging her child, the cries of whom were almost unbearable.

PANAMA PADRE

- 2) A coffin was carried past by four men (two Jamaicans and two Spaniards) on their way to the hospital to "fetch a dead", as the black people say. Four soldiers followed with fixed bayonets and guns on cock; the reason for this being that the men carrying the coffin were "pressed men" and should one have attempted to run away he would have been instantly shot. The soldiers were to fetch the body of a comrade and though they could have carried the coffin themselves, this was never done as civilians were always compelled to undertake the task.
- 3) A youngster had mounted a mule and was kicking it furiously to make it go. It suddenly started and went full tilt ahead and, as suddenly, stopped; the youngster was thrown some 10 feet beyond the mule's head and landed with a great splash in a pool of water and mud. No one went to see if the boy was hurt and no one attempted to stop the mule which had gone scampering away, but the whole district echoed and re-echoed with peals of laughter from other boys and people who were watching.
- 4) Ten minutes later, for it does not take long to nail down a coffin lid, the coffin bearers returned with their burden. As it was very hot they stopped, deposited the coffin in the road, lit their pipes and took a rest, enjoying a laugh as well as a smoke. Presently a donkey cart appeared; the soldiers halted it, ordered the men to place the coffin in the cart and compelled the driver to continue with the delivery duty, the four men being released.
- 5) Some Indians arrived and, on an open space nearby, commenced to erect their booths and to kindle a fire, the men of course watching while the women did the work.
- 6) A buggy driver dismounted to flog his poor horse. Meanwhile shunting began on some railway lines which crossed the road, hence when the driver remounted he found that he could not proceed till the shunting was complete.
- 7) A funeral car was shunted on the railway siding in the street outside my window to await its load. This was to be a more honourable burial than that of the donkey cart.
- 8) There was a shout and a cry from the Indian camp as one of the men armed with a large bowie knife pursued a woman who was fleeing from him.
- 9) At intervals soldiers were passing and repassing, they were poor dirty creatures without boots and with only rags on their backs, the embodiment of dirt, some being only boys of eleven to fourteen, their guns reaching many inches above their heads when placed beside them on the ground.
- 10) The coffin arrived, a better example than the previous one. It was pushed into the funeral car, the men tumbled in after it and opening the windows they pushed their heads outside and shouted to their different friends. The large bell of the locomotive, as big as many a church bell at home in Britain, commenced ringing and away the train went on another mission over old familiar ground.
- 11) A little child, quite naked, was sitting down in the middle of a big puddle in the road and an older girl was standing knee deep in the same puddle performing ablutions on her younger sister. Near-by in the Indian camp the same activity was taking place but with the difference that the Indians were better equipped, for the Indian child was having its bath standing in a baking tin.

But my sermon was not progressing very fast.

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to attend the Week of Special
Mission Services to be
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CULEBRA BAPTIST CHAPEL

From January 1st to 8th, 1906.

Special Preachers nightly at 7 p.m.
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and others.

All Services Bright, Hearty
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All are Welcome.

Bring your Friend.

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Special Prayer Meetings will be held nightly
from Dec. 26th, to 31st, 1905, preceding the
Mission.

Chapter 17

THE SECESSION OF PANAMA

The story of the French attempt to build the Panama Canal is familiar to many. The courageous enterprise of Count Ferdinand Marie de Lesseps, of Suez Canal fame, to undertake the construction of the Canal, the first arrival on the Isthmus of de Lesseps then aged 74 on 31st December 1879, the formation of the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interocéanique de Panama and the ceremonial cutting of the first sod on 10th January 1881 are long since matters of history. Actual excavation work commenced on 20th January 1882 and it was not till later that year that Count de Lesseps began to find that he had commenced a task so big as to make the Suez Canal look simple. It was a gigantic undertaking which, right from the start, was handicapped through causes little foreseen or understood. One of the greatest problems was the havoc played amongst both white and black workers by fever. Ronald Ross had not then made his great discovery that the female anopholes mosquito was the responsible agent for transmitting malaria, nor William Gorgas his epoch making proof that the female stegomyia mosquito was the culprit that transmitted yellow fever. Through lack of this knowledge yellow fever took a heavy toll of the French engineers, while both negroes and whites went down with malaria.

The French Canal Company never had the modern up-to-date machinery that the United States Government was later able to provide, for much of it was then unknown. The great five cubic yard Bucyrus steam shovels, the pneumatic rock drills, the ploughs for unloading spoil trains, the spreaders and other labour saving equipment, all of which would combine to facilitate the later excavation of the Canal, were unknown to the French. Furthermore the cost of constructing the Canal was grossly underestimated, with the result that the Canal Company had to be constantly raising additional funds by the issue of new shares and by resorting to the floatation of lottery schemes. All these factors, together with the irritating interference of Colombian officials, hampered construction work till on 4th February 1889 the Company became bankrupt and the work officially passed into the hands of the receiver. Count de Lesseps, with others, was tried and found guilty of fraud; so tragically his fame and glory were forfeited. But if one was to try and give the general opinion which was held on the Isthmus, Ferdinand de Lesseps was to be more pitied than blamed. The cost of the Canal had been grossly underestimated and de Lesseps had to have more money in order to continue construction work, but in this dilemma he fell into the hands of unprincipled financiers who used his name to pull the chestnuts off the fire. He was already an old man of eighty six when he was tried and he died, aged 89 on 7th December 1894, soon after being found guilty.

Into Colon had come ships loaded with equipment and machinery for the Canal including Belgian locomotives, vast numbers of railway wagons, even snow ploughs and numerous other kinds of equipment, much of which was never used. In Colon there were not sufficient wharves to cope with the ships and it was said that the captains of some, after waiting days and sometimes weeks to discharge their cargoes and seeing no prospect of unloading, having fulfilled their contracts in bringing their shiploads to the Isthmus, dumped their cargoes into the sea and departed. Such were some of the many stories that gained credence concerning the reckless waste indulged in by the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interocéanique de Panama.

After a lapse of three years in which little further work was undertaken, the New Panama Canal Company operating under the direction of the Official Receiver began work in 1894. The new scheme was nothing like as ambitious either in depth or in width as that undertaken later by the United States

PANAMA PADRE

government, but it was designed to meet contemporary needs. This work was continued till the official transfer to the United States government on 4th May 1904, but with an ever decreasing number of employees till at the time of transfer there were only 700 labourers left. At both ends of the Canal considerable dredging was undertaken and a great deal of excavation work undertaken in the Culebra Cut, the name by which the nine mile cutting from Bas Obispo to Pedro Miguel was then known. Much of the French Canal work later proved to be of service to the United States government, but not all. The French Company, which claimed to have spent US\$255 million, asked for US\$109 million from the US government. However, as nearly all the machinery was by then obsolete, most of the buildings and equipment out of repair and some of the excavation work was of no value to the proposed American scheme, the United States refused to pay more than \$40 million for all the French equipment and rights. Not till 4th January 1902, when the New French Company was threatened with total loss should the United States government decide in favour of building the Canal in Nicaragua, did the French Company in despair cable its acceptance of the United States terms.

In fact in the United States there was a strong lobby for a canal through Nicaragua as well as a lobby for a canal through Panama. The Panamanian lobby, however, won the day when it sent a Nicaraguan postage stamp which depicted the Momotombo volcano to each member of the US Congress. There are more than a score of volcanoes in Nicaragua and Momotombo erupted significantly in 1870 and 1886; hence, when Congress voted on the issue, Representatives and Senators, not wishing the Canal to pass through a volcanic region, voted unanimously for the Panama route.

It was not merely a matter, however, of whether the New Panama Canal Company would sell its rights, but whether the Colombian government at Bogota was prepared to transfer the concession from the New Canal Company to the United States, or to any other power, and to grant to that power the right to complete the construction of the Canal. This was the beginning of a bitter controversy between the Colombian government and the Department of Panama which was to have far reaching consequences. It was well known that there was a clause in the old canal treaty between the Republic of Colombia and the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interocéanique, as represented by Count de Lesseps, that in the event of the Canal Company not being able to complete the work by September 1902, later extended to 31st October 1904, the work which had been undertaken together with all the rights, property and equipment of the Company was to revert to Colombia, a plum not to be despised. On the other hand the United States was prepared to pay Colombia \$10 million, with an annual rental of \$500,000 after nine years, for the rights of the concession, for a zone of five miles on either side of the Canal and for certain other privileges.

On 22nd January 1903 these terms were agreed and a treaty was signed between John Hay for the United States and Thomas Herran for Colombia providing for the transfer of the canal concession. This treaty was ratified in Washington on 17th March 1903 and on 16th April a United States Canal Commission headed by Admiral Walker arrived at Colon. The other Commission Members were: Major Murray Black; Lieutenant Mark Brooke, US Corps of Engineers; Mr AC Harper, Civil Engineer and Mr Harry D Reed, Clerk and Stenographer. The Commission represented the interests of the United States and considered the status of various activities, it remained on the Isthmus eighteen days. Commission members and I exchanged visits, they took tea with me at the Mission House and I dined with them at their hotel; in our conversations, however, politics were never discussed.

Unfortunately, the Hay-Herran Treaty was rejected by the Colombian Senate at Bogota on 12th August, even though President Marroquin had already signed it. In Panama feelings ran high; there had been much intrigue and string pulling but at the final ballot in Bogota only one man, Senator Obaldia, the Representative of Panama, voted in favour of the treaty. Warnings had already been given that its rejection might precipitate the secession of Panama, but these warnings remained unheeded. For too long Panama had provided fat revenues for Colombia, but had received not even the building of a road or bridge in return; so it was not surprising that the Isthmus was seething with discontent and that dissent was escalating. For half a century the Department of Panama had metaphorically been the Colombian goldfield from which the yellow

PANAMA PADRE

metal had poured into Colombia's coffers in Bogota.

Following the rejection of the Treaty, it was a foregone conclusion on the Isthmus that the only way to obtain the building of the Canal was by the secession of Panama from Colombia. Accordingly a junta consisting of half a dozen of the most prominent Panamanians was appointed and arrangements were secretly made for a meeting to be held in New York City. The meeting was attended by Dr Amador; Amadeo Arosemena; Tracy Robinson, formerly with the Panama Railroad Company; J Gabriel Duque of the "Star and Herald" and G Lewis. Secretary Hay, in Washington, was informed of the junta's plans and, without in any way committing his government, he replied to J Gabriel Duque stating that, "If there is a revolution the United States will keep the Isthmus open and allow no fighting near the railway". Little straws often show which way the wind is blowing; a scare was raised in Panama City as to what would happen if a serious fire should break out in the city, there being no fire brigade. The outcome was that a volunteer brigade, to the number of 400 men including many of the leading citizens, was raised and the brigade was frequently and systematically drilled; this training, however, did not include the extinguishing of fires. This was not the first secessionist movement in Panama; there had been secessionist revolts in 1830, 1831 and 1840. At that time the United States of Colombia was known as New Grenada.

On 31st October 1903 the Colombian Congress went into recess having not only rejected the canal treaty, but having added insult to injury by refusing to allow the Department of Panama to retain the bounties from the pearl fisheries and salt mines, perquisites that Panama had always been allowed to retain to meet her own municipal costs. This was the last straw, it broke the camel's back.

General Huertas, who was in command of the Colombian garrison in Panama, then numbering about 400 men, was taken into the confidence of the junta and he readily agreed to cast in his lot with the secession movement. A few days before the actual secession took place, it was reported that a force of 70 armed Nicaraguans had landed on Colombian territory north of Penenome on the Atlantic coast. To repel these a force of 150 troops was sent from Colon on the gunboat "21st November". However, the report of the landing of the Nicaraguans appears to have been a bluff with the purpose of removing some of the Colombian troops whose loyalty to the secession movement was considered to be doubtful. Having landed the troops at Penenome, the gunboat, the crew of which was loyal to the secessionists, returned to Colon leaving the Colombians behind, thus avoiding possible bloodshed had they opposed the secession. Soon after the return of the "21st November" to Colon, that is at 5.30 p.m. on 2nd November 1903, the United States gunboat "Nashville" arrived at Colon.

Some hours later on the same day, the Colombian troopship "Cartagena", with 450 men on board who were destined for Panama City, also arrived at Colon. However, the General Superintendent of the Panama Railroad, Colonel JR Shaler, made a clever move. Difficulties were placed in the way of transporting the troops of the "Cartagena" to Panama, but Colonel Shaler suggested that if the Generals Taver and Amaya would like to proceed at once to Panama City, he would delay the early morning train long enough to enable his personal saloon coach to be attached to the train in order that the Colombian Generals could travel in it. Unwittingly they walked into the trap. On arrival at Panama the two Generals and their Staff were met by General Huertas; a band was playing, flags were flying and a detachment of troops escorted the fifteen Colombians to where they were to be entertained to lunch. After the meal, General Huertas quietly informed his guests, all of whom were wearing elaborate uniforms closely buttoned up and blazing with medals, that they were under arrest and that, as the building was surrounded by soldiers with fixed bayonets, it would be useless to protest. The Colombians were then promptly disarmed and marched to police headquarters where they were incarcerated.

Notice was then sent to the masters of the three small Colombian gunboats that were in Panama Bay at that time informing them of what had taken place and expressing the hope that they would join the secession movement. Two of the gunboats, the "Padilla" and the "Chucuito", remained silent but the Commander of the third, the "Bogota", sent a reply at 8.00 p.m. stating that if the Generals were not released by 10.00 p.m. he would bombard the city. At this the foreign Consuls united in sending him an appeal not to

PANAMA PADRE

take this action on account of the large number of foreign residents in the city, but the appeal was ignored and three shells were fired by the "Bogota". The Battery of the Bovedas replied to the fire, whereupon the "Bogota" beat a hasty retreat. One of shots from the "Bogota" had, however, killed a Chinaman and a mule, these were the only casualties of the otherwise bloodless revolution. The following day, 3rd November 1903, the Declaration of Independence was publicly read in the Plaza Santa Ana, Panama.

Meanwhile in Colon, the 450 soldiers, under Colonel Torres, from the "Cartagena" had landed but the Panama Railroad had refused to provide a train to convey them to the city of Panama unless the soldiers purchased tickets for the journey. As the troops had no cash the fares could not be paid, so they were forced to camp overnight in the streets of Colon. On learning next morning of the imprisonment in Panama City of his superior officers, Colonel Torres immediately notified the US Consul that if the Generals were not released by 2.00 p.m. he would burn Colon and kill every American in the city. As instructions had been received from Washington that under no circumstances were the troops from the "Cartagena" to be allowed to proceed to Panama, it was decided, after consultation with Commander Hubbard of the "Nashville", that all American men should at once be instructed to take refuge in the Panama Railroad shed, a stone building that could easily be defended, while the women and children were placed for greater safety on two passenger liners then in the harbour. This same protection was also offered to British subjects. Weapons were issued to all the Railroad employees who were willing to share in the defence and a guard of 42 marines from the "Nashville" took up defensive positions behind huge bales of cotton which were cargo in transit from a ship and which were used to barricade the entrance to the building. For one and a half hours the situation was tense as the Colombian troops surrounded the building in a very threatening attitude; only the calm and steady behaviour of the marines who were instructed not to fire unless they could not avoid it saved the situation.

In Colon harbour, when the Captain of the "Cartagena" saw the "Nashville" move in with her guns trained on his ship and her decks cleared for action, he thought that discretion was the better part of valour and, raising steam, the Colombian gunboat left at full speed. After a number of efforts to bring about a settlement with Colonel Torres had all ended in failure, he finally agreed to accept a bribe of \$8000 and to embark with his troops on the RMS "Orinoco", a ship on which I had travelled during my last voyage to Colon, all expenses for the Colonel and his men being paid by Panama. As the Captain of the "Orinoco" would not convey the soldiers without their first being disarmed, there was some little resistance and delay before the men could finally be persuaded to go on board. Furthermore the troops soon discovered that they had been betrayed, whereupon they laid hands on Colonel Torres and relieved him to the last dollar of the \$8000, with which he had intended to escape to Jamaica, this the soldiers shared out amongst themselves. Just as the "Orinoco" was about to leave her wharf, the USS "Dixie" arrived and, receiving an urgent message from Commander Hubbard of the "Nashville", launched 19 boats containing 800 marines. It had the desired effect; the Colombian troops, requiring no further persuasion, departed quietly. The following day, 6th November, in the presence of a large and thankful assembly outside the Colon Prefecture, the flag of the new Republic of Panama was hoisted by Major William Murray Black. A few days later the Colombian Generals left the city of Panama by ship. To quote the Colon Starlet of 12th November 1903, "Colombia did too much bluffing over the Panama Canal Treaty, but Isthmians went one better having had a trump card up their sleeves; Colombia had lost the game and, it is said, is now willing to reopen it". But her repentance came too late.

I, like many residents of Panama, knew little at the time of the events of late October and early November; for us life went on normally. The morning of 4th November I boarded the early train at Culebra in order to go to Matachin. On the train General HO Jefferies came to me and asked where I was going. On my replying, "To Matachin", he said, "Oh, that's all right; had you been going to Colon I would have warned you". At that he pointed to the newspaper, as yet unread, that I held in my hand and to the words:

"VIVA EL ISTMO INDEPENDIENTE!"

VIVA EL 3 NOVIEMBRE 1903!"

PANAMA PADRE

The Declaration of Independence of Panama had indeed been made on 3rd November 1903 and I was witness to these historical events.

On the first anniversary of the Declaration of Independence further trouble arose, which, but for the firm and prompt handling, might have had very serious consequences. General Esteban Huertas, the hero of the revolt against Colombia and idol of the people, wrote a letter to Dr Manuel Amador Guerrero, President of the newly formed Republic, demanding the immediate dismissal of two of the Ministers, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and War and the Minister of Public Instruction and Justice. The letter was nothing less than a plain threat of insurrection if his terms were not complied with. The President promptly conferred with the Secretary of the United States Legation, Mr Joseph Lee, as the Minister himself was absent on leave in the United States. Mr Lee advised the President to try and tide things over peacefully till after the three day's celebrations on the first anniversary of the birth of the Republic and, at the same time, assuring him of the determination of the United States to fulfil her part of the Treaty by not allowing any revolutionary upheaval in Panama. On 6th November 1904 a few hours after the celebrations came to an end, a plot was discovered for the forcible seizing of President Amador at a military review to be held the following day in honour of Senator Guardia, the newly appointed Minister of War. To counteract this, a firm note was sent by Mr Lee to General Huertas, and his collaborators, warning him that the United States would not tolerate any rising and that it was quite time that all such disturbances should cease. The warning had the desired effect and the military review passed off quietly, the more so as the opportune arrival of three United States warships in Panama Bay produced a salutary impression, as also did the drafting of a strong force of American marines at Ancon.

The Government of Panama decided to call for the resignation of General Huertas and to disband his army, numbering all told about 400 men, their weapons to be passed to the United States for safe keeping. During the disbanding and paying off of the troops the usual order prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors for a period of three days was enacted to prevent drunkenness. General Huertas, who had already received a gift of US\$50,000 as an acknowledgement of his services in helping to promote the Republic, was given a pension of five hundred Panamanian dollars (US\$250) per month and he retired to his hacienda in Aguadulce. Just a few loyal officers and men were retained, being sufficient to meet the statutory requirements of the Constitution of Panama and, at the same time, the strength of the police force was considerably augmented.

PANAMA PADRE

BOOK 2

1903 - 1919

UNDER THE STARS AND STRIPES

Chapter 18

THE BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC

There has been much debate about the statement, "I took Panama!", made by Theodore Roosevelt when President of the United States but, whatever may be said about it, nothing better ever happened for the Isthmus than when Mr Roosevelt became sponsor for the infant republic and adopted it under his paternal care. For some time conditions on the Isthmus had been deteriorating; the de Lesseps company had gone bankrupt and the New French Canal Company was only operating and keeping the Canal concession open with the one hope of being able to sell its rights and interests to someone else. As to the cost of the Canal, it is doubtful if any nation other than the United States would have been prepared to sink as much money in an undertaking when it was very uncertain whether the returns would cover the interest on the vast outlay. It must also be remembered that the United States was the one nation directly interested from a military point of view in being able quickly to transfer her warships between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans without having to go all the way around Cape Horn.

What Colombia was unwilling to concede for fair and reasonable terms, the newly born Republic of Panama was only too glad to be able to accept, as well as to benefit by the protection guaranteed by her new foster parent. It was high time that a stop should be made to the revolutions with their useless waste of human life; if Colombia was incapable of putting her own house in order, why should she be allowed to keep Panama in an almost constant state of suspense and ferment? As an Englishman, and one who had lived on the Isthmus during the three preceding years of civil war, I do not hesitate to say that President Roosevelt did the world a good turn when he guaranteed the independence of the Republic of Panama. To quote the words of an official despatch sent by the United States government to its Minister at Bogota, "He (the President) holds that he is bound not merely by treaty obligations, but by the interest of civilisation, to see that the peaceful traffic of the world across the Isthmus of Panama shall no longer be disturbed by a constant succession of unnecessary and wasteful civil wars". Let it not be forgotten, however, that the initial steps for freedom were taken by the Panamanians themselves. The very fact that immediately after the secession, Colombia was prepared to ratify the Canal Treaty, which but a month before she had scornfully rejected, should be conclusive proof that she could have ratified it well before the secession had she so wished.

On 6th November 1903, two days after the Declaration of Independence had been officially proclaimed in Panama, the United States government gave its official recognition and blessing to the new Republic; other governments soon followed. As for the Canal, a convention known as the Hay/Bunau-Varilla Treaty between the United States government and the Republic of Panama was ratified by Panama on 2nd December; this not only guaranteed the independence of Panama, but secured to the United States the sole right to build a canal across the Isthmus. The Treaty also provided for the use, occupation and control in perpetuity by the United States of a strip of land ten miles in width (five miles either side of the Canal), the cities of Panama and Colon not being included, and extending from coast to coast, together with any adjacent lands or waters outside the zone necessary for the construction of the Canal. This strip of land became known as the Canal Zone. Two months later, on 15th February 1904, the new Constitution of the Republic was adopted and became law. This was followed by the ratification of the Hay/Bunau-Varilla Treaty by the United States government on 26th February 1904. Thus was swiftly undertaken the ratification of decrees and treaties that secured to Panama the rights to govern her own

PANAMA PADRE

territory and to administer her own affairs.

After the Declaration of Independence and the introduction by Panama of her own currency, the Colombian paper money became extremely debased. When I accompanied a visiting friend, Dr TT Eaton, to the business of a well known money exchanger in Front Street, Colon, that he might purchase some Colombian paper money to take back with him as a souvenir to the United States, on asking the merchant if he could sell him some, the dealer replied, "Well, that depends on how much you want". With some trepidation Dr Eaton said, "Well, what would a hundred Colombian dollars cost?" "If that is all," the merchant answered, "I will be glad to give you that small amount", and into Dr Eaton's hands he placed one hundred dollars worth of Colombian paper currency; its actual value being three cents US.

For purposes of security the United States government did not lose much time in bringing marines to the Isthmus, 120 of whom, this number being later considerably increased, were stationed at Empire in the Canal Zone, a mile from my Mission House. Some of these men soon found their way to Culebra, also in the Canal Zone, attending our church services, so that I was able to make a number of contacts as well as visit them in their camp at Empire. It was often touching how, after a short conversation, some of them would go to some pocket or hidden place amongst their possessions and produce a Christmas card, a photograph, or some treasured letter from home most carefully wrapped up in paper and tied with a piece of ribbon or string and show it to me, a complete stranger whom they had never seen before and might never meet again. These conversations about their loved ones, sacred home ties, and the old Sunday school and church back in the States often led to higher things.

It was some months later that I received a telegram from the Commanding Officer of the same camp asking me to go there early next morning to commit the body of a marine who, after an illness of only a day and a half, had died of pernicious fever. I went feeling very conscious of the responsibility of conducting my first military funeral. From beginning to end I thought that the whole scene and service were most impressive. The attendance was entirely voluntary, yet over 300 men in uniform were present under the charge of their respective officers. The coffin, which was covered with the Stars and Stripes, was borne down the hill by some of the soldiers who were preceded by the firing party and who were followed by the Colonel, his staff and myself; then company after company marched in step with measured tread. At the foot of the hill were two canal locomotives with a short train of workmen's cars into which all embarked. It was only a short journey, but one not to be forgotten. In companies forming an almost perfect square, standing motionless and at attention around the open grave in a foreign land, knee deep in jungle grass and bare-headed beneath the scorching tropical sun, thousands of miles from their own homes, were three hundred men who had come to bury a comrade who, but a few weeks before, had arrived only to find his grave on foreign soil. Rain began to fall softly while a gentle breeze rustled through the jungle grass only adding pathos to the scene. Close to me stood the Colonel and his staff; after the reading of the simple burial service and committal, the coffin was lowered into the grave, the firing party advanced and three loud volleys broke the stillness as they echoed and re-echoed from the surrounding hills. There were quite a few wet eyes that day.

I had buried many before in that little graveyard, but the deceased was the first white man that I knew of to be buried there. As we walked away to re-embark on our workmen's train one of the officers walked beside me and with moist eyes spoke about other things. It had, I think, been the breaking of the ice and, for me, of my shyness too. One outcome of our meeting was that the Colonel and his officers volunteered to lend me all the assistance that they could in the finding and furnishing of a place in which to hold regular services for the marines as often as I could undertake them. How to take this on was another thing as my hands were already more than full; with the assistance of my teachers I was arranging for the conducting of some thirty services on average per week. Later, the arrival in 1906 of the Rev JL Wise, of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention of Atlanta, Georgia, enabled me to transfer the work of caring for the spiritual needs of the marines to him, the more so as he took up his residence at Empire.

PANAMA PADRE

The next step for the United States was the acquisition of the Canal property and rights from the New French Canal Company. This was completed by the United States government without any hoisting of flags or beating of drums; the event was signalled by the following cable that was sent by Lieutenant Mark Brooke to Washington:-

"PANAMA MAY 4 1904

ISTHMIAN WASHINGTON
PROPERTY TAKEN OVER AT SEVEN THIRTY THIS MORNING
BROOKE"

Henceforth the Canal Zone was to fly the Stars and Stripes, for Uncle Sam was to build the Panama Canal. It was to prove a memorable day for the welfare of the little republic and for the good of its inhabitants.

My work in Panama had commenced in South America under the Colombian flag, then without changing my sphere, but due to the revolution and the secession, I now found myself working in Central America, first under the flag of the newly created Republic of Panama and now finally under the Stars and Stripes in the newly created Canal Zone.

With the arrival from the USA, during the spring of 1904, of Major-General GW Davis, the first Governor of the newly created Canal Zone; Captain George W Shanton, the newly appointed Chief of Police; Dr C Pierce, Sanitary Officer; Paymaster EC Tobey and others, the Canal Zone began to take shape. In June arrived Mr John F Wallace, the newly appointed Chief Engineer and Colonel WC Gorgas who was to clean up the Isthmus and obtain the disappearance of yellow fever. With them came Mr Joseph Le Prince, Chief Sanitary Inspector; Dr Carter, Director of Hospitals and others who all played their parts in building up the official organisation that later was to transfer the Canal Zone from a revolutionary and pestilential hotbed to one of the best governed and most healthy territories. These men were but the forerunners of a continuous stream of engineers and officials who came by every ship from the United States for the civil government of the Canal Zone and for the organising of the construction, and the administrative work, of the Canal. It was good to see the Stars and Stripes floating over the Canal offices. Much of the work was, of necessity, but preparatory to the greater things to follow; there were still hundreds, if not thousands, of unemployed coloured people, it would take time to rectify this. Happily, with the advent of the American doctors, I was able to relinquish the amateur medical work that I had been undertaking, for which there was no longer the same need, thus freeing me to concentrate on my other work.

To describe the large amount of sanitary work undertaken in the Canal Zone, I cannot do better than quote our local newspaper of 6th September 1904:-

"When new construction begins next summer at least a year will have been devoted to the sanitary regeneration of the Canal Zone. An ample water supply, for which many miles of iron pipe are required, will then be at the disposal of officials and labourers. Hand in hand with that safeguard to health will go another, an adequate sewerage system in Colon and Panama. At least three expedients will be employed to check the breeding of mosquitoes. Some of the swamps will be drained, others are likely to be treated with chemicals and in still another group of localities the water level will be raised by the Bohio dam; one of the great features of the Canal. In these and in other ways a wonderful change will be wrought in the situation. General Abbott, in the August number of "The Engineering Magazine", shows that between 1881 and 1888, under the management of the Old French Company, the average number of cases of disease due to climate every year was 47.72 per cent of the total number of employees. Under the regime of the New Company the percentage fell 13.65 to 6.85 in 1901. A further diminution may confidently be expected when work under American auspices is under way. Indeed it is not improbable that within the next ten years

PANAMA PADRE

the prediction of the late George S Morrison that the Isthmus would become a health resort during certain months of the year will be fully verified (New York Tribune)."

To prevent mosquitoes breeding the authorities securely covered all our water butts with copper gauze netting; everywhere gutters were dug to drain off water and, as stated above, many of the swamps were covered with larvicide. In every town and village in the Canal Zone there was employed a team of men, under an American foreman, which went by the name of the "Mosquito Gang" and whose duty it was to clean up, dig gutters and drain off standing water, as well as to spray larvicide wherever needed. Furthermore we were provided with great iron refuse bins with lids, which the authorities undertook to empty.

Construction work on the Canal at this stage might be best described as wholly preliminary; experiments were conducted as to the best and most economical methods of excavation and the approximate cost per cubic yard was calculated. Orders for new and modern machinery had to be placed in the United States on what, to the uninitiated, seemed like a colossal scale; new buildings had to be erected and old ones renovated. In fact it was only from January 1907 that the Americans began Canal excavation in earnest. Many of the new arrivals from the States had to sleep in tents provided with wooden floors which, even under the best conditions, were far from desirable owing to the heavy rainfalls and plentiful supply of mosquitoes which showed contempt for nets. There was also the problem of providing a pure and ample water supply, this being an absolute necessity. In Panama it had been the custom to secure a supply of water by catching it from the roofs of the houses and storing it in uncovered barrels that in turn became the breeding places of countless multitudes of mosquitoes and in the dry season water pedlars carted supplies along the streets charging up to 15 cents US currency for five gallons. The United States undertook to solve this problem by raising the level of the Rio Grande Lagoon and converting it into a reservoir; the very Lagoon in which previously I had held so many of our baptismal services. Pipelines were also laid to provide an ample supply of water for the cities of Panama and Colon.

Shortly after the arrival of Major-General George W Davis as Governor of the Canal Zone, I went to Panama in order to call upon him. I naturally wore my best clothes for the occasion; but, alas, as the buggy in which I was riding was being driven down Central Avenue, a dirt street, the vehicle sunk up to its axles in the deep mud, not an uncommon experience after heavy rain. When it became clear that the poor horse could not dislodge the buggy, I had to dismount while two men, one on either side, tried to turn the rear wheels as the driver simultaneously whipped the poor beast. Suddenly the horse, which was nearly knee deep in mud, made another plunge, the whole vehicle moved and, though I had been careful to stand some distance away on the far side of the pavement, I was instantly covered with mud from head to foot. The only thing that I could do was to visit a barber's shop in order to have the mud brushed off my clothes, but no amount of brushing would remove those stains and in despair I had to visit Major-General Davis bespattered and besmeared from the mud. Perhaps that little incident will best describe the condition of the so-called streets in the cities of Panama and Colon after years of Colombian neglect and before the Americans remade them. These streets and sidewalks have since been reconstructed, sewers and water mains laid and the surfaces macadamised.

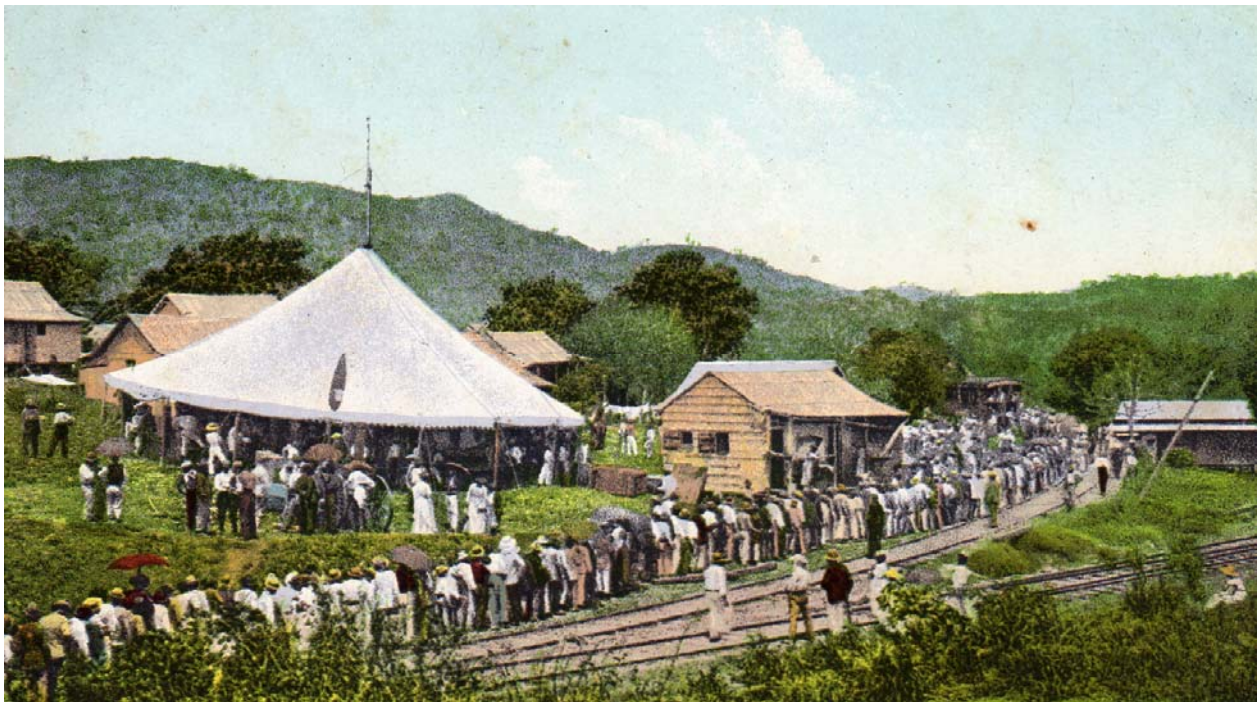
I found the Americans to be real hustlers; there was no sitting down on the job, they believed in getting things done. When once passing through Corozal, en route to Panama City, I was interested to see the foundations being laid for a large United States government hotel which would provide between one and two hundred rooms for bachelor employees; but when I passed again a week later the immense surface was covered with a great skeleton frame already two storeys high. This progress was quite typical. Where, one day, one would see dense bush from ten to twenty feet high, the next day one would see the jungle cleared and in its place an improvised road with a wagon and mule team at work. Places that were jungle were within six months transformed into flourishing town sites with their own water and electric light supply. At Culebra, in addition to numerous new houses that were in course of construction, a hotel similar to that in

PANAMA PADRE

Corozal and capable of accommodating several hundred employees was built. With the advent of an ever increasing number of Americans, many of whom were accompanied by their wives and children, things began to hum. Furthermore labourers were arriving on the Isthmus, often at the rate of from 800 to 1000 a week. Our Culebra church was crowded to capacity and frequently could not accommodate all the intending worshippers.

On 5th May 1905 Major General George W Davis, US Army, received a recall to the United States, after serving nearly a year as the first Governor of the Canal Zone; he was succeeded by Charles E Magoon as the new Governor. Another change, and one which caused at that time a considerable sensation was that of the resignation of Chief Engineer John F Wallace; it was described as "like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky". Mr Wallace had been on the Isthmus little more than one year and his resignation, coming as it did just at a time when the transition and unrest caused by the ravages of yellow fever, only helped to accentuate that feeling of being unsettled; the last thing that Washington would have wished to happen. Mr John F Stevens, who had engineering experience and who had been the General Manager of some of the most important railroads in the United States, was appointed in his place.

As Sunday was still being observed as payday, the Rev JL Wise and I called upon the new Governor requesting him to use his influence to terminate what we felt to be a harmful practice as well as seriously interfering with the undertaking of Christian work. Governor Magoon received us very sympathetically and promised to do his best; I am glad to say that not long after our discussion the custom of paying the men on Sundays was discontinued. As the Rev JL Wise had come to the Isthmus especially to work amongst the Americans and as the US Marine camp at Empire had been transferred to Bas Obispo where the force was considerably increased, I asked him if he would relieve me by taking over the holding of services among the men, the more so as I was just about to open another church at Las Cascadas. This new church was in a building kindly provided by the Canal Commission and was the fifth church under my care; Mr Wise readily agreed to my request.



Pay day for canal workers in Culebra.

PANAMA PADRE

A very welcome reform that was introduced by the Government on 1st July 1905 was the imposition of a licence fee of US\$600 (£120) per annum for the right to sell alcoholic liquor. Under the old law the licence fee was from \$2.50 to \$10 per month and its very cheapness was responsible for the existence of innumerable small and disreputable bars which in turn were responsible for constant disorders and drunkenness amongst the Canal labourers, to say nothing of greatly adding to the work of the police. The new law resulted in the reduction of the number of bars from 327 to 60, while at the same time more than doubling the revenue. Later the charge for a licence was increased to US\$1200 (£240) per annum. Though it by no means solved the drink problem, it was a step in the right direction.

Hundreds of new houses were springing up everywhere. The hotel at Culebra (unlicensed for the sale of liquor and for employees only) was enlarged to provide 250 beds and meals for more than double that number. By this time the Canal Commission had some 17,000 employees, of whom about 1500 were Americans, on its payroll; all these had to be fed, clothed and housed with supplies brought 2000 miles from the United States, itself no small undertaking. Hospitals were established with American doctors in charge; for the hospital at Culebra the building that was selected was the former French hospital, this was the building in which I had first lived on my arrival in Panama and which had formerly been the Colombian police cuartel.

After taking a service one Sunday night at Paraiso an old policeman in uniform came up to me and, shaking hands warmly with me, said that he remembered me from when he was stationed at Culebra and that he would like to stand me a drink, whether wine or whatever I liked. He spoke in Spanish and though on duty it was quite plain that he was drunk; I thanked him and told him that I only drank soda-water and that I would accept his offer another day. This short conversation was particularly interesting because it helped to explain a conversation that had taken place between the Alcalde and myself only the previous day. I had asked the judge why the policemen were moved so frequently from village to village; we then had not long emerged from being under Colombian rule and the same police force was now under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Panama. The Alcalde replied, "Because after they have been a week or two in a new place they often get too familiar with the people and get drunk two or three times a day". "Then how many times a day are they allowed to get drunk?" I asked. "Only once", he replied; "when they get drunk two or three times a day they are changed to a fresh place". This same answer I had received from others. It also explains why, during the disbanding of the troops, the sale of all intoxicating liquors was forbidden under heavy penalties for a period of three days. I had found this to be the practice when I first arrived on the Isthmus; when the Colombian troops were paid, and also at the time of general elections, the sale of all intoxicating liquor was rigidly prohibited.

Chapter 19

THE YELLOW FEVER EPIDEMIC

Having overcome, by Easter 1905, most of the political and other hindrances that were obstructing the construction by the United States of the Panama Canal, the Canal Commission soon found itself confronted with another. A hindrance far more insidious and difficult to handle; yellow fever.

At the time of the transfer of the Canal to the United States, the few Americans on the Isthmus, most of whom were employees of the Panama Railroad Company, through long term residence might be said to be immune from yellow fever, as also the native and negro population. But with the arrival of so many new and unclimatised employees from the States, some sleeping in tents and unscreened houses, the anopheles mosquito was soon busy biting the newcomers and infecting them with malaria, while the stegomyia was actively engaged in its more deadly work of spreading yellow fever. From 1st July 1904 to 30th April 1905 there was no alarming outbreak, some 68 cases of yellow fever were reported, while the deaths amongst employees numbered only eight; but this soon changed and assumed alarming proportions: in seven months 184 cases occurred with 57 deaths.

Amongst the earlier victims were Mr MO Jackson, Supervising Architect, and Mr RR West, Chief Auditor; there was hardly an office in the large Administration Building, then in the city of Panama, which had not one or more vacant chairs due to yellow fever. One Saturday night, just after I had retired, I was called upon by a Canal Watchman who brought the following telegram which had been signed by the Chief of Police (US), Panama:

"WEST DEAD AUBREY DYING STOP PLEASE COME FIRST TRAIN TOMORROW
TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUNERAL".

Mr West was a Baptist and had conducted a service at Corozal only the previous Sunday; as for Mr Aubrey, he was also a Baptist and had conducted a service for me at Culebra only a few weeks before and had visited me at the Mission House. Fortunately the Rev and Mrs JL Wise, newly married and newly arrived on the Isthmus, were staying with me at the Mission House, Mr Wise having come to organise Baptist work amongst the Americans for the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention of the USA. Mr Wise kindly consented to take my service for me on the Sunday morning so as to enable me to go to the hospital. On arrival I learned that it had been decided to postpone the funeral of Mr West till the following day in order to allow for the embalming of the body for removal to the United States. However, I was able to visit Mr Aubrey who was in a ward with 16 or 17 other cases of yellow fever; I found him to be desperately ill, but he was able to give me a message for his wife and children in the States.

To give some idea of the widespread fear created by this outbreak of yellow fever, 62 men resigned from their posts and sailed for the States on one steamer, while many others followed on the next ship. To quote the words of the official Canal Report, "A feeling of alarm, almost amounting to panic, spread among the Americans on the Isthmus". Bienowski, in his book "Canal Zone Pilot", states:

"During the height of the scare some of the offices had scarcely a working force available, not from sickness, but because of desertion. The boats left Colon crowded on every trip,

PANAMA PADRE

and many a one took steerage passage rather than wait for the next vessel. There were two or three cases that resulted fatally where employees had been on the Isthmus less than ten days. The more hardened sort took a huge delight at this time in retailing terrible stories for the edification of the scared newcomer. A case is called in mind where two young men arrived on the Isthmus of the morning of a certain day and reported for duty; sent in their resignations in the afternoon, and returned to the States by the boat leaving the day following. They lost no time in getting out."

In fact on the Isthmus, those of us who claimed to be "old timers" commonly spoke of those who joined the exodus back to the States as suffering from "cold feet".

During the epidemic an American newspaper published a cartoon with two scenes; the first was of the Culebra Cut with, beneath it, a caption stating "so many thousand cubic yards excavated here last month", the second scene was of our little Culebra Burying Ground with, beneath it, a caption stating "so many tens of thousand cubic yards excavated here last month". This may well have been inspired by the Scriptures, "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands". As far as the Canal work was concerned, the cartoon was without foundation, but it must have created a very unfavourable impression in the United States of conditions on the Isthmus.

To one man, Colonel (later General) WC Gorgas, the Isthmus owes the fact that in just a few months he was able to rid it of yellow fever. His appointment to Panama as Head of the Department of Sanitation speaks for the foresight and wisdom of President Theodore Roosevelt; had he searched the whole of the United States and Europe he would not have found a more suitable or better fitted man for the task. With an efficient staff, comprising Dr Claude C Pearce, Dr JP Perry, Dr Carter, Dr Ross, Mr Joseph L Le Prince and others, Colonel Gorgas lost no time in commencing work and laying the foundation of the most efficient organisation for battling with tropical diseases and their causes that the world had known; this ultimately resulted in converting Panama from a hotbed of fever and disease, notorious as the graveyard of so many white men, into almost a health resort having a mortality rate below the average of many a large city in the United States. Dr Gorgas himself computed that in eight years the French had lost 20,000 lives, or one third of the total of their white employees. Had that same rate continued under the US regime it would have meant that, in the ten years occupied in the construction of the Canal, a loss of approximately 35,000 American lives as well as having 13,000 staff constantly in hospital. But the very opposite was the case thanks to the very latest methods of sanitation, the installation of an up-to-date water supply and the constant war being waged against the mosquitoes. This resulted in the reduction of the mortality rate from 170 per thousand in the French days to 8.91 per thousand by March 1913 under the American administration; at this time there were 54,000 employees on the payroll. Great as was the engineering triumph in the construction of the Great Waterway, it was no more remarkable than the triumph over malaria and yellow fever that made its construction possible.

Unfortunately Colonel Gorgas was hampered and obstructed in the early stages of his efforts by a great deal of official red tape and lack of sympathy and belief in his methods. The mosquito theory might be said to be still in its infancy and, though proven, only understood by a few. When buildings were screened with copper gauze to keep out the mosquitoes, the screening was often torn or deliberately cut and the very purpose for which it was placed was defeated. Also the Colonel often experienced delays and difficulties in obtaining the necessary supplies and equipment for the efficient undertaking of his work. When things came to a crisis with 62 cases of yellow fever in one month resulting in 19 deaths, orders were cabled from Washington to stop, if necessary, all construction work on the Canal and divert labour to the work of sanitation and the destruction of the breeding places of the mosquito. Colonel Gorgas was also given a free hand regardless of cost in the matter of ordering and obtaining all necessary supplies. As the yellow fever mosquito breeds in and around buildings, every house, shop, hotel and building of every description in the cities of Panama and Colon and in the villages and towns scattered along the line was sealed and fumigated.

PANAMA PADRE

At the height of this work, in the month of August 1905, the Health Department alone employed nearly 3000 men. Their objectives were realised; the number of cases of yellow fever fell from 27 in August to seven in September and four in October.

One place that provided an unexpected breeding ground for the mosquito was no less an edifice than the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Panama; many complaints had been made by the worshippers that they were constantly being bitten by the little pests. To quote the local newspaper:

"It was scarcely to be presumed that the female mosquitoes would be so sacrilegious as to lay their eggs in holy water, but so religiously have they been persecuted throughout the city that the ladies had to find an unoled crib for their youngsters, and they turned in despair for religious protection."

When the Sanitary Inspector insisted that the holy water must be changed every two or three days, he was told that that was impossible as the water had been brought all the way from Jordan. However a compromise was finally arrived at when the Bishop consented to salt being placed in the water, something that the ceremony permits. The Chief Sanitary Inspector told me that having received several complaints from the YMCA that one of their club houses, though completely screened, was infested with mosquitoes, he sent more than one of his Inspectors to locate the cause. Having searched the building both inside and outside in an endeavour to find the breeding place, they met with no success. Eventually he decided to go himself; on walking up to the Secretary's desk, the first thing that he noticed was a spittoon on the floor, the lid of which he kicked off. Instantly a small cloud of mosquitoes rose from within. "There", he said, "is your trouble, you ought to know better and have this properly cleaned out every day".

On the western slope of Ancon Hill and overlooking the La Boca road was an old French house known as, and named by the French, "Dingler's Folly". It was said to have cost US\$125,000 (£25,000) and was not only well furnished but possessed well laid out grounds. Its erection was commenced in 1883 by M Jules Dingler, the first and one of the foremost Director Generals of the French Canal Company, a capable engineer and highly spoken of; the house was intended for his own occupation and that of his family. On his arrival with his family on the Isthmus in the autumn of 1883, before he could occupy the building, his son and daughter and also her fiancé all succumbed to yellow fever. He was heart-broken and returned to France, but came back with his wife to the Isthmus at the end of October the following year; two months later his wife too died of yellow fever. His story was one of the most pathetic in the history of the Panama Canal. His successor, Léon Boyer, arrived in Panama in January 1886, only to succumb to yellow fever four months later. It is on record that a British brig, while in Colon Harbour, lost all her crew of twelve from yellow fever in September 1884; Philippe Bunau-Varilla, the well known French engineer and one of the signatories to the Canal Treaty, stated that there were other ships in Colon Harbour at the same time without a soul on board. In Panama Bay one of the then three small islands, later all linked with the mainland by the dumping of earth and rock from the Canal, used to be known as "Dead Man's Island" because, in all cases of death from yellow fever occurring on ships in the Bay, the bodies were landed and buried there.

So successful were the methods adopted by Colonel WC Gorgas in stamping out yellow fever that the last case to occur in the Canal Zone during my time was that of Mr Northorpe, Station Agent at Matachin, on 29th September 1906. That is to say that there were no deaths from yellow fever from that date until 1919 or later. I had visited Mr Northorpe a few days before his death and, later, I conducted his funeral service; some years before I had conducted his mother's funeral service at Mount Hope Cemetery. His brother, familiarly known to all as Charlie, was Train Despatcher at Colon; both brothers were exceedingly nice men. I knew Colonel Gorgas quite well; he was the perfect gentleman, always courteous, always the same, one who not only won, but held, the esteem of all the men who had the privilege to serve under him. It was on a hot autumn day towards the close of 1916, as I was walking along the road from Panama towards Balboa, that a swiftly moving car with a uniformed chauffeur passed me and then suddenly

PANAMA PADRE

stopped. A head popped out of the window, it was Colonel Gorgas, now raised to the rank of Major-General; he had just returned from a tour of South America where he had been studying conditions with a view to the elimination of yellow fever there. He was just the same Dr Gorgas with a warm hand-shake and a cordial greeting; it was to be our last meeting, for less than three years later he was to pass away while on a visit to London. Major-General Gorgas was one of God's good gifts to suffering humanity.

Due to the yellow fever epidemic and the lack of sufficient housing, much of the excavation work for the Canal was brought to an abrupt standstill. This was in order to enable all labour to be concentrated on the more immediate essential work of destroying the mosquito and its breeding places; building houses and hotels for employees; construction of reservoirs and laying of water mains to provide the cities of Colon and Panama and the towns and villages of the Canal Zone with an ample supply of pure water, something previously quite unknown; also the construction of an adequate sewer system, another innovation for the Isthmus. So important was it considered to concentrate every effort on the sanitation of the Isthmus that the newly appointed Governor of the Canal Zone, Charles E Magoon, in his first Annual Report of the work of the Isthmian Canal Commission (1905), states:-

"The gravity of the crisis was apparent to all, and steps were immediately taken towards the adoption of every possible means for the stamping out of the disease. The Chief Sanitary Officer was assured that the entire resources of the Canal Zone were available to assist in the urgent work of stamping out yellow fever on the Isthmus and the money, means and men to the extent of the Commission's ability would be placed at his disposal."

In the city of Panama, after the United States government had reconstructed the streets and laid down a proper drainage system and water supply, the return of the first tropical downpour was always a great occasion. It was a sight worth watching to see the little black boys and girls run out of their homes into the streets and to sit down naked, often waist deep, in the swirling rushing water, enjoying being swept along in the gutter amidst much of the accumulated refuse of months.

In the very thick of the fight against yellow fever, a new and even more alarming foe appeared and against which many precautions had already been taken. It was the dreaded bubonic plague. On 15th June 1905 a negro labourer who was employed in the handling of freight on the wharf at La Boca was taken ill; five days later he was admitted to Ancon Hospital suffering from symptoms of plague and three days later he died, the autopsy confirmed the diagnosis that it was the plague. A most thorough and energetic campaign was then instituted for the fumigation of buildings and the destruction of rats. As investigation disclosed that the rats on La Boca wharf were infected, the town of La Boca was strictly quarantined, a double cordon of police being drawn around the town on both land and water. Sulphur gas was pumped into buildings for six hours at a time after they had first been sealed, all clothing and bedding also being separately treated. All fowl houses, shelters for animals and small annexe buildings were torn down and burnt; no effort was spared, however drastic, in seeking to rid the entire district of both rats and mice, a price of US\$0.05, later increases to \$0.10, being placed upon each head for every one destroyed.

On 15th July, exactly one month after the first incident, the quarantine was lifted, no new case of plague having occurred. Unfortunately on 24th August a Barbadian employed in the lumber yard at La Boca was taken ill and died in hospital, at Ancon, two days later. His case was diagnosed as bubonic plague, probably due to a flea from some rat that had managed to escape the earlier very thorough fumigation. As he had been living in a labour camp with some 300 other men, the building from which he was taken and two adjoining labourers' barracks were burnt to the ground. The same thorough process of fumigation was undertaken, though this time it was confined to a smaller area. The work proved a complete success, no further cases of plague occurring on the Isthmus.

Chapter 20

HONEYMOON IN JAMAICA

1905 proved to be an eventful year. In the Canal Zone we witnessed a large influx of Americans, the scourge of the yellow fever epidemic and the fight against the mosquito. For myself, however, the principal event occurred on 7th November when I relinquished my bachelorhood.

"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing,
and obtaineth favour of the Lord."

I had these words of Solomon in mind when, on 2nd November 1905, I sailed for Jamaica, arriving at Kingston on the 4th, after an unusually calm and enjoyable trip. Amongst my fellow passengers on the voyage was a cousin of RD Blackmore, the author of "Lorna Doone", and also an ex-president of Ecuador who was on his way to Washington to take up his duties as Ambassador for his country. Three days after my arrival I was united in marriage to Ethel Rebecca Pratt, then 19 years old and nine years younger than myself, who was the third daughter of the Rev William Pratt MA, Minister of East Queen Street Baptist church, Kingston, a church with nearly a thousand members. I had first met Ethel during my visit of January 1901 to Jamaica and subsequently when recuperating from the attack of fever at the home of the Pratts during February 1902, when making a stopover in Kingston during August 1902 and when spending nine days working in Kingston during 1904. Mr Pratt had been educated at Bradford Grammar School, England and at Queen's College, Oxford, was a Hasting's Exhibitioner and had won other distinctions during his University course. It was during his first pastorate at West Haddon, Northamptonshire, England that most of his children, including Ethel, were born. Then came a brief pastorate at Pembroke chapel, Liverpool which was followed by the call to Jamaica where he faithfully laboured for twenty seven years.

We spent our honeymoon at Mandeville, some sixty miles from Kingston and delightfully situated high up amongst the hills, a favourite resort of tourists on account of its cool and enjoyable breezes. Resolved that the knowledge that we were newly married should not leak out, we were particularly careful not to betray our secret; but alas, two or three days later our landlady received a Kingston newspaper which gave a report of our wedding. On the landlady informing her maid who waited on us, the girl replied, "Well Ma'm, I thought it was rather funny that, when they were having something to eat soon after they had arrived, I heard the lady ask her husband if he took sugar in his tea".

Jamaica is the "Pearl of the West Indies" and the largest of the British West Indian Islands with an estimated population of 900,000, of whom less than 2% are white. Discovered by Columbus in 1494, it remained a Spanish possession until captured by Admirals Penn and Venables in 1655. The Spaniards introduced African slaves to work their plantations and mines and this was continued by the British after their occupation until the abolition of slavery by Act of Parliament in 1834.

My purpose in going to Jamaica towards the end of January 1901 had been to attend the Annual Meeting of the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society with which, at that time, my work on the Isthmus was associated; also I was expected to speak at the Annual Meeting. During that first visit I spent just a fortnight on this beautiful island, visiting and speaking in several of the churches including Kingston, Salter's Hill, Shortwood and Mount Carey. It was a unique experience and the first time that I had the privilege of

PANAMA PADRE

meeting some of the leaders and veterans, both British and native, of our Baptist work in Jamaica. Jamaica will ever remain as a beautiful star in the history of Christian missions; a tribute to the noble self sacrifice, endurance, devotion and suffering of many of our pioneer missionaries; not a few of whom endured persecution, imprisonment and threats with death in their fight against slavery and its attendant evils. The names of Knibb, Burchell and Phillippo will live in the annals of the fight for the emancipation of the slave in the British West Indies. In that once dark and benighted land, the scene of untold misery, these men and their successors planted the Gospel standard and left flying the flag of freedom and religious liberty.



Marriage of Moss Loveridge and Ethel Pratt 7 November 1905.

Jamaica has suffered much from both earthquakes and hurricanes. Of the earthquakes, two of the worst were those of 1692 and 1907; the former destroying the greater part of Old Port Royal and both involving the loss of many hundreds of lives. Port Royal has an interesting harbour; below the water lie the remains of the old town which was once the rendezvous of the buccaneers. The buccaneers had made Port Royal their headquarters and storehouse for their spoil; the population of the town then numbered about 18,000. However, at mid-day on 7th June 1692 a mysterious roar was heard in the Blue Mountains, this was followed by the shock of the earthquake. In a few moments wharves, ponderous with spoil, sunk below the

PANAMA PADRE

water to a depth of five fathoms; the same was true of some 3000 houses and the crowded streets which, but a few moments before, had displayed the glittering treasures of Mexico and Peru. There are many authentic accounts, still preserved, of the destruction wrought by the earthquake. From one old book in my possession, written by one who was born in Port Royal, or perhaps more correctly what remained of it, less than a century after the earthquake, the writer describing conditions just before the town was submerged states:-

"Port Royal, in a few years, became a place of great riches; the privateers and buccaneers making it their rendezvous, it was notorious for the most fearful profligacy of manners and the daring wickedness of its inhabitants, while the gold and silver is said to have been thrown in heaps into the yards of the possessors in vain display of their success in despoiling the towns and destroying the lives of their fellow men." (Merrick, page 21).

Though chronologically it may be premature, it is opportune to refer at this point to the other disastrous earthquake, that of 14th January 1907, which completely destroyed the city of Kingston; over 1000 people lost their lives and the damage to property was variously estimated at between one and one and a half million pounds (5 to 7½ million dollars). We even felt the tremors on the Isthmus, crockery being shaken on the shelves and pictures thrown out of plumb on the walls in our Mission House in Culebra. But what the earthquake left unfinished in Kingston, fire destroyed; for a dozen or more fires started in different parts of the city, doubtless caused by the shaking of burning charcoal out of the braziers on which the natives were accustomed to cook on their verandas, and which would soon set their flimsy wooden houses ablaze. As for the fire brigades, they were helpless, for not only had their own buildings been wrecked, but even had their fire-engines escaped harm they were powerless to move because the roads were blocked with rubble from fallen roofs and walls while electric light and telegraph poles with an entanglement of wires lay in every direction across the streets. Many persons met their death by being pinned down beneath the wreckage with no chance of escape from the advancing flames.

The churches, without exception, were amongst the first buildings to collapse. Why God should allow His churches to suffer destruction seemed to puzzle many of the Jamaicans; but the explanation was not far to seek, for many of the buildings seated between one and two thousand people and had a great expanse of roof, mostly unsupported by intermediate pillars. As soon as the earthquake shocks began to sway the walls, these moved outwards so that the great beams and rafters supporting the roofs came crashing down.

One of the interesting freaks of the earthquake was that the statue of Queen Victoria at the foot of King Street turned around on its pedestal without falling. It was also interesting to notice that the large cracks in the concrete pavements throughout the city, caused by the earth tremors, always ran in parallel directions, though the cracks themselves might be irregular. Another interesting outcome was that over one thousand marriages were said to have taken place within the first few days following the earthquake due to fear caused by the sudden awakening of conscience of those whose marital circumstances were not legalised.

At the Mission House in Culebra the news of the earthquake proved a very anxious time for Ethel for, amongst the earliest unauthenticated reports, her father was said to be amongst the killed, and as all cable and telephone wires were destroyed, no reliable news could be obtained. Two weeks elapsed before we were able to ascertain that he was still alive, but seriously injured. It would appear that when the first shock occurred he was caught between a falling wall and a fence and in a moment was buried beneath a heap of falling bricks and masonry. When rescued it was found that he had received severe injuries to his spine, his right leg was dislocated and the thigh fractured so that he was never able to walk properly again. The Mission House and church were reduced to ruins. I took Ethel over to Jamaica to see her father shortly after the earthquake.

Some months after the earthquake, as soon as Mr Pratt was well enough to withstand the journey, he

PANAMA PADRE

went to England for treatment under the noted surgeon Sir Pearce Gould, whom he personally knew. But by the time that he reached England his leg had become so set outside the hip that nothing could be done to reset it. Later he paid us a visit on the Isthmus, remaining for a short time, which we greatly enjoyed. Though permanently lame, Mr Pratt lived to continue his work in Jamaica for another ten years; then, in need of further medical treatment, he left again for England in 1917, the third year of the Great War. Unfortunately Mr Pratt never properly rallied after the operation and shortly afterwards we received the news of his death. In Jamaica, as well as further afield, the news caused widespread sorrow, for he was greatly beloved by the coloured people and highly esteemed.

For some weeks after our arrival on the Isthmus after our honeymoon, we had an almost uninterrupted run of visitors who came to spend a few days or longer with us; some were old friends, others were missionaries in transit for whom we always kept open house and to whom we were glad to extend hospitality. I would go down to Culebra railway station to see someone off and, from the very same train that the person boarded, someone else would arrive unannounced; it almost seemed as though we were not to be allowed to enjoy our newly married life alone. Happily for Ethel's sake, as well as for mine, for a while this entertaining ceased almost as suddenly as it had begun. Shortly after her arrival on the Isthmus, Ethel celebrated her twentieth birthday. As to the Mission House, some months before the wedding, and in anticipation thereof, I had had it repainted and the veranda screened with fine copper gauze netting, in common with all the Canal buildings, in order to keep the mosquitoes out. There were five large packing cases of furniture which had arrived from England, a wedding gift from my parents; these had to be unpacked and put into use. The furniture proved to be a most welcome addition to the somewhat sparsely furnished Mission House. Ethel entered whole-heartedly into helping me in my mission work, accompanying me to most of my services, sometimes by train and sometimes in the saddle; at many of the services she played the harmonium.

Eight months after our wedding we both sailed to England for a much needed holiday as both of us were run down and just recovering from fever, besides Ethel had not yet had the opportunity of meeting my family in the old country. We left Colon in August 1906 on the SS "Panama" for New York, where we trans-shipped for England. After a brief but beneficial furlough with my family, which had removed to a large house in Llandaff, near Cardiff, we sailed in October for Jamaica on the RMS "Port Henderson", stopping en route at Turk's Island in order to exchange mails with the store; whilst there it was very interesting to observe the great salt pans where the salt is reclaimed from sea water and dried in the sun. We passed, as we left the Island, several dangerous coral reefs and, during the night, the island of Haiti; the following day we steamed past Nevasa Island. On Sunday the ship's Captain conducted the usual Church of England service and asked me to read the lessons. For the last two or three nights on board we abandoned our cabin for the Music Saloon as our cabin had become so insufferably hot that sleep was out of the question. On arrival at Port Royal, Jamaica, Ethel left me in order to pay a short visit to her family whilst I proceeded to Colon, where Ethel soon rejoined me.

Less than a year later Ethel, being pregnant, sailed for Britain to stay with my parents till after the birth of our first child; Guy Moss was born on 8th September 1907. The name Guy being that of a much loved younger brother of mine who had died at the age of two and the name Moss, like mine, being the maiden name of my mother. Needless to say that, on their return to Culebra just a day or two before Christmas, both mother and son received a great welcome. My little son was then three and a half months old when we saw each other for the first time.

After one of our tropical downpours in Culebra, at about 8.00 p.m. when the moon rose, I had the opportunity of witnessing a most glorious lunar rainbow. It was enhanced by the fact that I could see it through the fronds of a nearby palm tree from which were dripping ten thousand rain drops which sparkled like diamonds in the moonlight; a magical experience. Another wonderful sight was that of Hayley's Comet which Ethel and I were fortunate to see on 18th May 1910 at 4.30 a.m.; we had a magnificent view of the rare appearance of the Comet.

PANAMA PADRE

On 23rd January 1911 Ethel and I were delighted to announce the birth of our second son, Stanley Livingstone. To ease the work load on Ethel we appointed an English Governess, Miss Chapman, who willingly assisted with looking after the two boys; this was useful because my duties entailed spending much time away from the Mission House. In due course Guy attended primary school in Empire; for the one-mile journey from Culebra to Empire the Railroad Company provided Guy with a free rail pass.

Some years later, a friend gave our two boys two squirrels, one an English red squirrel and the other an American grey squirrel, and with them a very large cage. As both boys were young, and as so often happens with the pets of one's children, the responsibility for feeding the squirrels and cleaning their cage fell upon myself. But no matter how I tried to coax the squirrels or to tempt them with dainties they would never allow me to approach them or to touch them, they always ensured that they were beyond my reach in another part of the cage. I do not think that ever before I had met with such difficulty in trying to make friends with any wild creatures as I did with these squirrels; and this lasted more than a year. But one day when I went to open the cage door in order to feed them I found that the old grey squirrel was lying dead on the bottom of the cage. The astonishing thing was that as I opened the door the red squirrel sprang out and on to my shoulder; it did not try to escape but remained on my shoulder and went into the house with me, we came out again together and it returned into its cage. From that time on it was tame and would accompany me, on my shoulder, anywhere. I think that the explanation of the sudden change in conduct was that probably it was living in constant fear of its older companion and that it had a desire for company when the grey squirrel was dead.

Guy and Stanley had another pet, a kitten of which they were very fond. Unfortunately this half-grown cat found a misplaced amusement in chasing and catching snakes with which she played regardless of whether they were poisonous or not, holding them in her mouth and letting them go just as other cats play with a mouse. The first time it was a coral snake which is very poisonous; were one to bite a man death could well follow in a few hours. This snake, however, was not fully grown and when the cat seized it, she released it and caught it again, repeating the process several times, till I finally killed the snake. The second snake was a fer-de-lance, also very poisonous, but happily also not fully grown; this one was very vicious and more than once made a lunge at the kitten in order to bite it. Whether each time the snake took a mouthful of hair and did not like it I do not know, for the cat received no harm and only wanted to be allowed to continue her little game. Twice the fer-de-lance succeeded in escaping from me before I was able to kill it, the second time disappearing under a pile of stones which covered the entrance to a drain. So I removed the stones till at last I was rewarded by catching a glimpse of its tail, only to see it disappear into the drain itself. As this was close to the house, I asked our washerwoman to throw several buckets of dirty water down the drain while I despatched Guy and Stanley to keep watch at the other end. As the water came rushing out, suddenly there was such a yell as the boys saw the snake washed out. This time I gave it no chance to take cover and, with my stick, flung the snake high and dry on the bank in an open space where I was easily able to despatch it to its death.

PANAMA PADRE



Moss and Ethel Loveridge with sons Guy (left) and Stanley (right).

Chapter 21

HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN

On 16th August 1905 I was appointed by the Canal Zone Governor as Resident Chaplain to the Culebra Hospital in the Hospital Service of the Health Department. The hospital was housed in the same building that had been granted to me by the New French Canal Company on my first arrival on the Isthmus and was where I had lived for over a month until the building was commandeered by the Colombian police for use again as a cuartel; later the building was surrounded by a party of revolutionists and five police were shot dead and a sixth mortally wounded. This same building, after a thorough renovation, enlargement and adaptation, was converted by the Americans into a small line hospital that, with the addition of several floored tents, provided accommodation for just over one hundred beds. It was strange that I should be appointed as United States Chaplain to the very building in which I once had lived and which held so many recollections of the past for me. While my duties as Chaplain required that I should visit the hospital every day to hold services when possible, to write letters for the sick and to conduct all funerals, it was also understood that it was not intended to interfere with the undertaking of my regular pastoral work in connection with my own churches. I found the doctors always helpful and ready to assist; to them I owe my thanks for many a kindness.

At the hospital I held a service every Sunday afternoon in the largest ward, the Medical Superintendent and his staff attending. My coloured man, Daniel, carried to the hospital our baby harmonium which my wife, Ethel, would play. In those days the Hospital was crowded to its utmost capacity; such cases as could be moved were usually transferred twice daily by ambulance to the railroad station and from there were transported in specially equipped hospital cars, attached to the passenger train, to either Ancon or Colon Hospital, there to receive further attention and at the same time relieving the congestion in our smaller hospital. When going on my daily rounds in the hospital I often carried both gospels and tracts in as many as six different languages, for we had not only English, Spanish and French speaking patients in the wards, but often Italians, Greeks and occasionally even Chinese, as well as representatives from other lands. Unfortunately I am no linguist and in the early years, apart from some Spanish words that I had picked up, I confined my conversation, except when speaking through an interpreter, to my mother tongue.

In going round the wards one met many interesting cases. I recall that of a Spaniard who at first took exception to a tract that I had given him on the story of the Prodigal Son. On the cover it had a picture of a father and son both attired in modern dress, but it was not till I visited him again next day, and he had had time to read it through and to think it over, that he said to me how exactly it described him, for he had run away from his home in Bogota, Colombia, and that his one desire now was to return home to his father again. I sometimes had men on their sickbeds unburden their hearts to me and confess to having committed almost every known sin, short of murder itself, and whose consciences gave them no rest. At such times, after hearing some of the sordid things that I had to listen to, I have sometimes felt as though I would like to place my head under some village pump so as to cleanse my brain, but it was a privilege to be able to tell of One who could cleanse us all from sin. The outcome of such confessions and prayers for forgiveness led to more than one wedding in a desire to try and put wrongs right.

One day two Roman Catholics, the one from Martinique and the other from St Lucia, both asked for

PANAMA PADRE

prayer. The Martiniquais seemed very troubled about his past life and wept like a child when I tried to tell him something of the love of God. He asked me to pray for him in the church and wanted to pay for the prayers; however, he seemed quite surprised when I told him that I would gladly do so, but never took payment for such. Another interesting case was that of a Chinaman who knew me; when I spoke to him of God he, to my surprise, said, "Minister, me love God, me no such bad man, me try to be good". Surprised at hearing him speak of knowing so much, I said to him, "Why John, where did you learn of the love of God?"

In broken English he then told me that "long, very long ago", he used to attend a mission church in China; when I asked him where this was, he replied, "It was Hankow", but that it was so long ago that he did not remember much anymore. I thought of the parable of the good seed that fell by the wayside.

A sad case was that of a young Englishman who had had his arm nearly torn from its socket in some machinery and, though the arm was amputated at the hospital within three-quarters of an hour after the accident had happened, gangrene had set in. The doctors held no hope for his recovery so they sent the ambulance post-haste to the Mission House for me as they sometimes did in urgent cases; I had already been round the hospital earlier in the day. The doctors were anxious to ascertain the man's name and address as they had cause to suspect that he was there under an assumed name. I found him very drowsy and all he wanted was to be allowed to sleep. I asked him to allow me to write to his people, but he declined to give me their address saying that he would write to them himself as soon as he was better; when I offered to pray with him, he thanked me but declined, asking me to return again after he had had some sleep. I returned later in the evening to find him sinking fast; we had a little further talk as I sought to lead his thoughts to higher things, the things that are external and that really count. Before I left he confided in me that he was on the Isthmus in the secret service of another government and that was why he refused to give his real name and his home address. I treated this information as strictly confidential, letting his secret die with him as all ministers should do.

It was while going on my rounds visiting the patients in the white ward of the Culebra Hospital that one of the patients, an Italian, told me that his name was Garibaldi and that he was the grandson of Giuseppe Garibaldi, the patriot and liberator of Italy. Needless to say I was interested, but at first a little sceptical till after tactfully asking a few questions I was convinced of the truth of his statements. He had been sent to the Isthmus by the Italian government to watch the interests of, and care for the welfare of, the Italian contract labourers, but it was not long before the Canal Commission offered him a better paid post as interpreter and mediator in any disputes between the Commission and the men. This was in August 1906, just before I went to England with Ethel on leave, during which I planned to accompany my brother Alec, but leaving Ethel in Llandaff with my parents, on a visit to the continent of Europe, and Giuseppe Garibaldi was particularly anxious that I should visit his father, General Garibaldi, in Rome. As I did not want to commit myself to any social engagements of any sort while on holiday I tried to excuse myself, but in vain, for on the morning of our departure Giuseppe Garibaldi suddenly appeared at the railway station and thrust a letter, addressed to General Garibaldi in Rome, into my hand and said, "If you don't go to Rome, put it in the fire, but if you do go, you are to be sure to call and see my father".

On my arrival in England I found that Alec had indeed included Rome in our itinerary. When in Rome I purposely left calling till near the end of our visit when, one afternoon, we made our way to the Garibaldi Mansion only to be told by the old gate-keeper that General Garibaldi and his daughter had left that very morning for their summer seat. I confess that I felt glad; we left the letter and my card which gave my English address and expected to hear no more. But to my surprise, soon after returning home to England I received a letter, written in beautiful English from Miss Garibaldi who was a worker in the Methodist Mission in Rome, expressing her father's and her own disappointment at missing anyone who knew her brother in Panama. The letter was so cordial and so sincere that it made me feel ashamed that I had been so reluctant to visit them; I did not meet her brother again. The Garibaldis were all of fighting stock; at least two of the brothers, I believe, were Colonels in the Mexican "Land and Liberty" revolution of 1910-1911 which deposed old General Porfirio Diaz and several of the Garibaldis, I also believe, took part

PANAMA PADRE

on the side of the Allies in the Great War of 1914-1918 during which one or more of them was killed.

I found that many of the contract labourers from Spain were avowed atheists. When visiting some of them in Culebra Hospital and offering them copies of the Gospel of St John in Spanish, they would refuse saying in broken English, "Me atheist, me atheist", until one of their number would exclaim, "Protestante Padre". Instantly the whole atmosphere would be changed; those that were allowed to be out of bed would crowd around me with outstretched hands asking for the gospels. This happened several times, clearly showing that their resentment was not against the gospels but against the Roman Catholic church as they knew it in Spain.

Many of the West Indian labourers arrived at the hospital so under-nourished that they were unable to stand up against typhoid, pneumonia and other ills and, when attacked by one of these, many of them proved to be an easy prey and succumbed. Hence the doctors advised the Canal Commission that it should take over the feeding of all unmarried men, this was instituted by the Commission which provided them with three good meals a day at the ridiculously low price of 27 cents (1/1½d) per meal. These meals comprised a plate of meat and vegetables heaped up, a thick slice of bread and a mug of coffee. The results surpassed even the best expectations, there was a remarkable drop in sickness and, where there was illness, a much higher percentage of recovery.

At six o'clock one morning I was called to visit, at his home, one of my members, a West Indian, who was reported to be dying. I found him to be speechless and in convulsions, so I went and asked one of the American doctors, as a personal favour, to come and see him. After a careful examination the doctor said that the case, having been left too long, was almost helpless; had he been called a day or two sooner the man's life might have been saved, as it was he had but a few hours to live. However, were he to be removed at once to hospital he had just three chances in ten of surviving; to the suggestion of an operation the man's wife refused to consent. I returned with the doctor to the hospital where, with the two other doctors, we held a short consultation with the result that they were willing to receive him and to operate immediately. Hence, I went to see the Sanitary Inspector and was able to borrow four men and a stretcher. On arrival at the hut, the wife absolutely refused to allow her husband to be removed, saying that if he was to die he should die at home. It was natural and I felt sorry for her, but I tried to point out that if there was no operation, death was certain to take place within a few hours, whereas if he underwent the operation there was just a fighting chance. But she was obdurate and would not consent. I spoke to the sick man, but he was too ill to care what might happen to him and was willing for anything that might relieve him of his pain; so I decided to override his wife's objections and to assume the responsibility myself. As I gave orders for the removal of the man my feelings were of grave responsibility and anxiety as to the outcome. Fortunately the operation proved to be a great success; the man made a quick recovery and I felt devoutly thankful to God that all had ended so well.

Funerals in the early days were frequent and, on more than one occasion, I have taken three the same day and, once, eight in one week. On account of the tropical heat interments had to take place on the day of death, or at least within twenty four hours; hence burials could be on Sundays, just the same as any other day. So on Sunday it was not unusual to see our hospital ambulance drawn by two big Kentucky mules waiting outside our Culebra church for the service or wedding to be over, to take me as quickly as possible to the hospital for a funeral, as the authorities knew that on Sunday every moment of my time was fully occupied. Not far from the hospital, situated back in the bush, was another little cemetery; a cemetery where I had what was probably a unique experience, that of burying not only the first person as well as the great majority of those laid to rest therein, but also the last person to be interred there when the cemetery was abandoned. In one corner of that cemetery, set apart from the other graves, were those of three men all of whom had been executed for murder as well as two or three other graves of prisoners who had died before their prison sentences had expired. At such burials two or three prison officers were always present and they would remain until they had witnessed the grave completely filled in.

I also acted as Chaplain at Ancon Hospital during the leave of the incumbent; hence the following

PANAMA PADRE

story. When visiting the Major of the United States Army who was in charge of the laboratory connected with the Ancon Hospital, and who specialised in the analysis of the strength of different snake and other poisons, I noticed, on entering his laboratory where he had many specimens both dead and alive, that he had two large boa constrictors almost identical in size, each coiled on the seat of an old-fashioned high office stool; both were motionless and apparently asleep. While we were talking, Tom, a negro and a professional rat catcher, arrived with several rats, still in traps, that he had caught and brought for the purpose of having their fleas examined for bubonic plague. As soon as Tom was inside, the Major mischievously said to him, "Tom, close the door and release one of the rats"; this was for my benefit. Tom had no sooner accomplished this than in a moment first one and then the other boa uncoiled and swiftly dropped to the floor after the rat. The first one to grab the rat slowly, but none the less surely, began to gulp it down alive, so that by the time that the other boa had seized the other end of the rat, half of it had disappeared. Meanwhile the second boa, not only gulped down the remaining half so that nothing could be seen of the rat, but opened its jaws still wider, for they can unhinge their jaws in order to take in large prey, till it began to take in the other boa's head. As the situation was certainly becoming serious, the Major asked me to take hold of one snake while he took hold of the other, that we might pull them apart. It reminded me forcibly of the two men in a tug-of-war pulling in opposite directions on the same rope, for the boa has hooked teeth and, though the teeth are but small, once it has taken hold of its prey, it does not easily let go. So we pulled and pulled till finally boa number 2 let go its hold of boa number 1 which still retained possession of the rat. Apart from a few scratches on its head caused by the teeth of number 2, no harm had been suffered by number 1, inside of which the rat had bodily disappeared.



Ambulance, Ancon Hospital.

As the Canal work progressed many of our smaller hospitals were closed, but Culebra Hospital was retained as a prison hospital; other patients being sent to the two big hospitals at Colon and Ancon.

PANAMA PADRE

However, our Culebra Hospital was not to continue in use for long, for it had to be finally closed at the end of April 1913 due to the rapid development of slides on the West bank of the Canal. For some months the Canal Commission had been able to retain the hospital in use by means of a weekly jacking up of the sills which had been carried off their foundation pillars. Furthermore, on account of the development of a great gaping chasm, ever widening and deepening, access to the hospital could only be gained by crossing a plank gangway which spanned the fissure, this being reminiscent of the drawbridge over the moat of a medieval castle. The building had been in use as a hospital by the Canal Commission for eight years; for me the building was full of memories, not only of my daily visits as Chaplain to the sick and dying, but also of my stay there on my first arrival on the Isthmus.

Chapter 22

CHURCHES, OLD AND NEW

It was towards the close of April 1906 that I received a notice from the Canal Commission in which I was informed that our old church building at Culebra had to be removed within fifteen days as steam shovels were being set to work to level the site for the construction of railroad sidings; all of that part of the native village in the vicinity also had to be demolished. Hence on the first Sunday in May 1906 we held our closing services in the old building that I had already twice enlarged; a week later it was demolished. For various reasons I was sorry to see it go, yet I could not but feel it to be a blessing in disguise as it forced the issue for us of the erection of a new and more modern place of worship in the proposed new town. I temporarily secured the use of an empty Chinese store at a rental of US\$40 per month (£100 per year); to this building we removed our seats, platform and American organ. Later I was able to obtain from the Canal Commission the loan of a large tent in which to hold our services, thus saving the rent that I was paying to the Chinaman for the use of his store. Here we held an eight-day mission conducted by an American evangelist, Mr Robert Shorts, who came to us from Costa Rica; he was a most sincere Christian and earnest preacher and his visit was the means of accomplishing much good.

Meanwhile I arranged for a contract to be let to a firm in Liverpool for the construction of a corrugated iron church building to be made to our own plans and in sections that could be bolted together, dismantled and shipped to the Isthmus for re-erection at Culebra. We were grateful to my father who undertook the negotiations for me and who, with the assistance of a few friends in England generously contributed towards the cost. At Culebra I was busy preparing the site and supervising the erection of the concrete pillars and baptistry, for which the Canal Commission gave some thirty tons of stone and sand and we furnished our own cement. This work was mostly undertaken by free labour; the men mixing and placing the concrete, while the women and children (piccaninnies) carried the stones and sand. The stone laying ceremony took place on Good Friday, 29th March 1907, when His Honour, Judge HA Gudger, Chief Justice of the Canal Zone, laid the foundation stone for us. Unfortunately all this preparatory work was made useless for, while the new building was on its way out from England, the Canal authorities, who had leased to us the new site, decided to raise the level of the whole site of the new town by dumping some scores of train loads of earth and rock and thus burying our newly constructed concrete foundations to a depth of more than 20 feet. This delay was a great disappointment; the new ground had to be allowed to settle before the new foundations could be begun, hence the newly arrived church building had to be unloaded by the side of the line, covered with tarpaulins and left with all the sacks of bolts, nuts, screws and drums of oil and paint till such time as we could carry on again. Let it be said that the Canal Commission honourably made good all the concrete foundations that, through its altered plans, it had been compelled to destroy. But this delay was not our only misfortune that we were called upon to suffer, for a new organ, ordered from the United States for the new but unavoidably delayed building, had to be stored in its packing case in the Wesleyan school hall; unfortunately this hall was shortly afterwards burnt to the ground and our new organ perished in the conflagration.

It was not till the latter part of August that we were able to start the erection of our new building but, once begun, the work was undertaken and completed in just under five weeks. I supervised the erection myself and usually had from a dozen to 25 paid men working during the day, but in the evening all labour

PANAMA PADRE

was free. I was very much touched by a white American foreman coming to me and saying that his carpenters (also white Americans) would like to be allowed to come and give their services after their normal work if I would only ask them. So for two or three weeks from six to ten American carpenters voluntarily came night after night to help erect a church building in which coloured people would worship. The Panama Railroad lent us two great locomotive headlights which we erected each side of the building so that we were able to continue the work after dark; at about ten o'clock we would strike work and go up to the Mission House to partake of an ample supper that I had arranged in advance.

From England I obtained a consignment of reversible seats which had been made to order, a communion table with chairs to match and four large brass bells, of which one was for Culebra and the others were for three of my other churches. At the same time, from my old home church in Great Britain where I had been a member, came a generous gift of communion cups and plates. To the Canal Commission we were indebted for the installation of electric light and the construction of a path leading to the entrance of the church, all free of cost. A gift that I think touched me more than any other was from some of our earlier members who, during the time when there was much unemployment, left to work in the Darien Gold Mines on the Caribbean seaboard; from there they sent, as a thank-offering, US\$66 (£13/4/2) from their humble earnings. On 29th September 1907, 21 days after the birth in Britain of my son Guy, amidst great rejoicing and thanks-giving, our new church at Culebra was officially opened; and on Christmas Day we made use of our new baptistry for the first time when thirteen candidates were baptised. During 1907 thirty eight had been baptised and 16 others received by transfer or restoration making a total of some 54 additional members; that year weddings numbered 26.

On Sunday 4th December 1906 the village of Frijoles suffered from one of the worst floods recorded on the Isthmus; the Chagres River rose 33 feet 6 inches above low water mark in 73 hours, submerging fifteen miles of railroad track for over a week. It had been raining all Saturday, and Sunday was no better; having taken a service that morning at Las Cascadas, I took the train on to Frijoles in order to preach there in the afternoon. I shall not soon forget that journey, the rain just poured and poured and poured. On both sides of the line the jungle was inundated for scores of square miles from the flooded river, the swirling waters having rapidly risen on both sides of the track; it was a unique sight. At Frijoles our service had not long begun before an American policeman appeared at the door and whispered a message to one of my deacons who at once passed it on to me. I was asked to tell the people that the flood waters of the Chagres River would reach the village and inundate it at about 5 p.m., it was then a little after 3 p.m., and that there would be a special train in the siding to convey the inhabitants with their belongings on the relocated line to higher ground. Under the circumstances it was impossible for me to continue the service, so pronouncing the benediction I dismissed the congregation to allow people to make their preparations for vacating their homes and removing their belongings to safety. As I could do nothing to help and had to be back at my church at Culebra in time for the evening service, I caught the afternoon train; this was the last train to run for many days. As the train moved southwards the line on which we travelled became submerged, while the water in ever mounting waves rushed past us on both sides in angry torrents; a food train, despatched just behind us, was not able to cross the flood waters and had to return to Frijoles. A week later, as soon as the water had sufficiently subsided for the first train to run, I returned to Frijoles in order to rally my flock. In our church building I found that the high water mark had reached 8 feet 5 inches and that the building itself, being of wood, had nearly both capsized and been swept off its foundations. Thanks to the courtesy of the Railroad Company the building was later restored to its rightful position. The rush of water had swept open the windows and, through them, had carried the communion table and chairs; the pulpit Bible was later recovered from a swamp two miles away, needless to say it was hopelessly spoilt.

At Matachin, 11 miles from Frijoles, the water stood 7 feet 3 inches above the railroad track; the church itself, being on higher ground, escaped. Standing in the railroad ticket office a few days after the flood had subsided, one could clearly see the high water mark; as at Frijoles, the subsiding water had left a thin film of mud upon the walls. Four miles further north, at Mamei, one of my church members, while

PANAMA PADRE

attempting to save a friend from the swirling waters, was himself swept away and drowned.

At Paraiso, on account of the laying of railroad tracks, much of the village had to be abandoned and our little church, which once had been a rum shop, had to be demolished. To remove it was not possible, so I promptly sold it to a man who wanted it for the lumber and who gave me more for it than the original purchase price. I then applied to the Canal Commission for the loan of another building in order to enable me to continue the holding of services at Paraiso; this was granted and the services were continued without interruption.

In July 1909 I was able to start work on the erection of a new church at Haut Obispo. I took advantage of the American national holiday, Independence Day, to call for free labour to transport between 12,000 and 15,000 cubic feet of lumber from the railroad to the summit of the hill on which we were about to erect our new church. This call met with the usual willing response and on the next day we began the erection of the concrete foundations and pillars; on account of the damp, wood ants and numerous other creatures it is usually advisable to construct all wooden buildings at least 3 feet above the ground. As normal, I employed my own carpenters and labourers at Haut Obispo and supervised the erection myself. It meant a considerable amount of travelling backwards and forwards to and from my home each day, but it was the most satisfactory way as it enabled me to complete the building and open it for worship within six weeks.

At the end of the same month work was begun at Culebra, adjoining our church, on the erection of a Young Men's Institute. I had long felt the need for a building to provide comfortable accommodation with easy chairs and electric light where coloured young men could spend their evenings and where they could be provided with newspapers, magazines and other suitable reading material and with small table games such as draughts, dominoes and chess. Such a place was badly needed as a counter-attraction to the saloons; I talked this over with Colonel George W Goethals, Chief Engineer, and as usual found him quite ready to help. It was agreed that the Canal Commission would erect the building and furnish it and that I would be responsible for providing a caretaker and his salary and for the cost of supplying the newspapers, magazines and games. The building was completed and officially opened on Panama Independence Day, 3rd November 1909. Unfortunately it had only one year of life; interest was keen at first but soon began to wane, the newspapers and magazines did not have much appeal or find many readers. The young men wanted a billiard table, this I provided but only on the clearest understanding that there was to be no betting in connection with the game. Billiards was popular, but when later I discovered that betting on some of the games was taking place, not on the premises but in a saloon in another street, I thought that it was time to close down. Although personally considerably out of pocket by this adventure, I reluctantly asked Colonel Goethals to release me from my part of the agreement; this he did. Application was then made for the use of the building by the Episcopal church and, later, by the YMCA and, though both allowed dancing and card playing which I had rigidly debarred, they met with no greater success. Both gave up after a few months and the building was finally converted into a plumber's shop and store.

In October of the same year I secured the use of a labourers' camp building at Cucuracha from the Canal Commission in which to conduct services and which we equipped for the purpose. Here grew quite a healthy and thriving cause which included a flourishing Sunday school. One year we engaged our own special train to convey both scholars and friends to Gatun, a distance of 30 miles; there were ten passenger cars carrying 476 scholars and adults. At Gatun I had had large swings erected beforehand for the children and with organised games both young and old spent a very happy day. On another occasion I obtained from the Canal Commission the free use of a labour train, ordinarily used by the Canal Commission for the transportation of employees to and from their place of work. This use was readily granted subject to two conditions: that we would develop our own timetable which did not conflict with any other scheduled train and which had to be approved by the Train Despatcher, and that we would engage and pay our own American train crew. This was accomplished, it was the first and only time in my life that I ever compiled a railroad time schedule.

PANAMA PADRE

At Frijoles our church building which had been generously given to us by the Railroad Company was, together with the rest of the village including the railroad station and railroad tracks, condemned in order to make way for the rising waters of the new Gatun Lake. The new village was to be located on the new railway line, 3 miles away, where a lot had been assigned to us for the erection of a new and more commodious church building. By rising at 4.30 each morning I was able to have my breakfast and catch from Culebra the 5.30 labour train which daily conveyed hundreds of workmen to their different spheres of labour along the line of the Canal; to reach Frijoles I had a rail journey of some 18 miles and a 3 mile walk through the jungle to the site of the new town, but in the cool of the early morning this walk was a delight. During one such trip I met on the bush trail a handsome species of wild black cat, quite as large as a retriever dog, which I took to be one of those rare, but not unknown, black jaguars; if so it was a young one. On meeting one another we both respectfully stopped in order to avoid a head-on collision and, after a pause of a few moments, the black jaguar quietly turned round and trotted away.



Sunday School outing in chartered train to Gatun.

Supervising the construction of the new church at Frijoles was strenuous work because I still had my normal church work to undertake which included conducting evening services at Culebra after returning

PANAMA PADRE

home at night. But by employing a sufficient number of men I was able to complete the building and have it open for services in just over five weeks; the new building included a belfry which housed a large brass bell, one of the four recently purchased in England, which was used to summon our congregation to worship. When going out to New Frijoles one Sunday to conduct a service I had a narrow escape: it was before the total abandonment of the old railway line and I had descended from the passenger train and started to walk along the single line which ran for 3 miles through the jungle and which connected the old line with the new; as I was walking one of our tropical deluges happened and in a moment I was as thoroughly soaked to the skin as if I had been in the river with all my clothes on. The rain was so heavy that it was impossible to see or hear anything from 12 to 20 feet away on account of the dense curtain of falling water and the noise that it made as it fell on the trees and railroad track. Suddenly I became aware of a large railroad locomotive looming up in front of me and almost upon me; I had had no chance either to see or to hear its approach because of the noise and density of the rain. I had barely time to jump off the track on which I was walking. The locomotive was taking someone out to the main line from which I had just come; the locomotive driver, having seen me, was looking for me on his return journey ten minutes later and he stopped to pick me up. As we made our way to the relocated line, the water was dripping off my clothes on to the footplate; but I was now under the shelter of the cab.

Less than a fortnight after the opening of our new church building at Frijoles on 16th October 1910, another flood occurred which again submerged Old Frijoles; this was the worst flood since that of 4th December 1906. I was preparing to take the early morning train in order to preach at Frijoles at 11 o'clock, when I received a telephone message to the effect that the railroad line was submerged and that all traffic had had to be suspended. Though the flood waters this time were 3 feet lower than on the previous occasion, many of the people, including quite a few of my congregation, had to take refuge on the roofs of their cabins until rescued by boats; forty of the residents were taken to Tabernilla where they were temporarily housed in an empty labourers' barracks. Others removed to New Frijoles which stands on higher ground, where they found temporary shelter. It was a sad bedraggled company that I found when, as soon as the receding waters allowed my return, I visited the village to try and hearten my scattered congregation. Household goods were in many instances ruined, while sparse clothing only too plainly showed the results of exposure to the elements. The later construction of Gatun Lake, which submerged many of these villages, effectively terminated the periodical floods.

I have already described a major fire at Bocas del Toro; Colon, too, was not without fires, during one of which, as will be seen, we nearly lost a church. Colon has always had an unhappy notoriety for fires and, in the past being built almost entirely of wood, was always vulnerable. During the revolution of 1885 the town was so completely destroyed by fire that only seven buildings were left standing, 15,000 people were made homeless and the estimated loss of property was placed at six million dollars. The then leader of the revolution, Pedro Preston, was accused of having started the fire; he escaped to Cartagena, but was captured and brought back to Colon where he was tried by court-martial and hanged. During the American construction of the Canal there were several serious fires in Colon, the worst of which were those of 1911, 1915 and 1916.

On Thursday 23rd March 1911 quite a large section of Colon was burned to ashes in little more than two hours; over ten large blocks comprising 118 buildings were destroyed, over 1200 people were rendered homeless and the loss of property was placed at US\$400,000. The fire extended to some of the Canal Commission buildings in the Canal Zone; our new reinforced concrete Baptist church with its Pastor's home above, paid for by the Home Mission Board, was completely gutted, the Rev S Witt and his wife losing all their possessions and barely escaping with their lives. The fire was finally brought under control by the blowing up of buildings which were in its path. Reinforcements of firemen and police were sent over by special train from Panama City; but unfortunately their efforts were handicapped by the feebleness of the water supply which was due to the heat having driven some of the firemen back leaving eight hydrants open as they retreated, thus wasting the precious water just at the time when it was so badly needed. In the

PANAMA PADRE

absence of the Rev JL Wise on furlough I made application to the Canal Commission for the temporary use of a labourers' barracks in which to continue the services, this was granted. Three years later, in 1914, through the indefatigable and unsparing labours of the Rev S Witt, and with the financial assistance of the Home Mission Board, the church and mission house were completely restored and services were again held there.

The Colon fire of 1911 was a disastrous one, but it was followed by another, even more destructive, four years later. On 30th April 1915 one third of the city, comprising 430 buildings in an area covering 22 blocks, about 19½ acres, was completely destroyed; the damage was estimated at three million US dollars. Five people lost their lives, eight were seriously injured and some twenty others required dispensary treatment and 7500 people were rendered homeless. All the available fire brigade resources of the Isthmus, including two tug-boats which assisted by pumping water through great lengths of hose, were called into service. Both the Colon railroad station and the Cristobal Commissary were amongst the buildings that suffered some damage.

Again, on Sunday 9th July 1916 in the early morning a fire occurred which destroyed two blocks of buildings and cost six lives. Twelve hundred people were rendered homeless this time and damage was estimated at US\$120,000.

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Chapter 23
OF FRIENDS AND FESTIVALS

Good Friday and Easter Sunday on the Isthmus were always occasions for very special services. Having made arrangements for a baptismal service in the Chagres River at dawn on Good Friday 1904, I had given my coloured man instructions to call me at 4.00 a.m. that day and to prepare an early breakfast. However, he must have been confused by the brilliant moonlight for he awakened me at 2.00 a.m., so I sent him back and told him not to return until 4.00 o'clock. At 4.15 he awakened me again; as I had to leave at 4.30 there was now insufficient time for breakfast so I had a quick cup of tea and left on horseback for my seven mile ride in the brilliant moonlight to Matachin. It was a lovely ride in the cool and stillness of that early morning with even nature, apart from a few owls and some small wild animals, still fast asleep; as I rode along the railroad track I revelled in the quietness and the opportunity for silent meditation before my service. I reached the Chagres River just as dawn was breaking to see the mist rising in great clouds from the river; already a very large congregation of West Indians with a sprinkling of French and Spanish speaking natives had assembled. After the baptismal service, for which all candidates were as usual dressed in white and I again wore my cricket flannels, I remained for the 11 o'clock service in the church at Matachin and for the following communion service at which the newly baptised received the right hand of fellowship. I then caught the afternoon train to Frijoles, having already sent my horse back to Culebra.

At Frijoles I found the church to be already packed; after a short service we all made our way to the Frijoles River where, at 5.00 p.m., I held another baptismal service. Here speaking was much more difficult on account of the noise made by the water as it tumbled over its rocky bed. Later we met in the church for another service followed by communion when the newly baptised candidates were received into church membership. Leaving Frijoles the next morning by the early train, I found my horse and man awaiting me as planned at Culebra station where I mounted and rode to the Rio Grande Lagoon in order to supervise the final preparations for yet another baptismal service which was to be held early the following morning, Easter Sunday. There was a number of church members present, all busily engaged in the construction of large booths, made of palm branches, in which the candidates would change after the service.

On Easter Sunday I again left home at 4.30 a.m., but this time after having partaken of breakfast. I first went to the church at Culebra where a crowded prayer meeting was being held and, after dismissing the congregation, we all proceeded to the Rio Grande Lagoon where about 800 people were assembled. After the baptismal service we had an overflowing congregation at Culebra church at 11 o'clock and a full attendance at the communion service that followed. Altogether some 40 new members were received on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, including a few who had been transferred or restored. That evening I went to Paraiso where I welcomed others into church fellowship. As usual no candidate was received into church membership till after most careful examination and attendance at an instruction class for three to six months. While the construction of the Canal was being transferred from the French to the Americans there was much unemployment resulting in more of our people leaving the Isthmus in search of work elsewhere; in spite of this we had much cause for encouragement as the Lord added to our number day by day those that were being saved. Practically all my work on the Isthmus continued to be amongst the English speaking West Indians and amongst, albeit a smaller number, the Americans.

On the Mission Hill at Culebra I had some orange trees which bore prolifically; these were soon

PANAMA PADRE

discovered by some of the marines, for one day I found several of them with sacks freely helping themselves to my fruit. I approached them and told them that they were welcome to the oranges but that I thought that it would be decent if they asked permission first; the outcome was that from that time on, if there were any oranges left, they always came and asked and we became good friends. Later I took my lantern to their camp at Empire and showed the men pictures of England, Jamaica, Pilgrim's Progress and the life of Christ.

It was when showing a picture of the crucifixion that there was such a hush as one could not forget, so I left it on the screen a little longer than the other pictures, whereupon everybody stood up and sang, "Safe in the hands of Jesus". There must have been many memories awakened that night.

After an association of seven years with the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society I felt led, in 1907, to resign my connection and transfer my services to the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States. For years I had felt the urgent need for another worker and for financial help in the erection of new buildings to meet the ever growing demand; in the cases of both the Mission House and our new Culebra church I had had to raise almost the entire amount required myself on the Isthmus, through my family and through the gifts of personal friends in Britain. But to quote the man in the parable, "To beg I am ashamed". Most urgent of all was the need for another missionary for the work amongst the coloured people, but my appeals bore no fruit. I appreciated to the full all that the Society in Jamaica had tried to do, but its means were limited; on the Isthmus our needs were urgent for thousands of new contract labourers from the West Indies and other areas were constantly arriving and their spiritual needs had to be met. The Home Mission Board had already sent from Louisiana the Rev JL Wise and his wife about a year before to begin work amongst the white Americans; furthermore the Board was willing to assume responsibility for work amongst the negroes and it had the means which the Jamaican Society did not have.

Hence, though it was not easy to sever my connection with the Society, I felt that it was the only right course to take. Having already approached the Committee in Jamaica concerning the transfer of my work, the Committee did not see its way to give its consent at the time, accordingly I resigned with the result that permission for the transfer of the churches on the Isthmus to the Home Mission Board was at once given, this being on 1st October 1907. It was clearly better that the Baptist work on the Isthmus should be carried on under the direction of one Mission Board rather than under two separate ones; furthermore the Isthmus was now under the Stars and Stripes, this being another factor in favour of the American Board. For me it was to be a very happy arrangement, as also it was for the churches; henceforth, instead of carrying the burden of having to raise the greater part of my stipend in the field, this now came from the States and I was allowed to raise all that I could through my churches directly for our own extension work, for the erection of new buildings and for the employment of two Jamaicans on full salary as lay workers both for preaching and visiting, a system that worked well and bore much fruit.

Looking back I shall always count those years spent with the Home Mission Board as amongst the happiest of my life. It was a pleasure and joy to receive the letters of the late Dr BD Gray, then Home Secretary, for their friendliness and their spirit of appreciation and cooperation. When one wrote about anything and asked for instruction and advice, the answer was always, "Brother Loveridge; we leave it entirely to your judgement, you are on the spot and know the circumstances and the people and you will do what you believe to be best". I shall always cherish amongst my happiest memories that of my happy relationship with the Home Board. In January 1908 the Board voted \$10,000 (£2000) for expenditure on the white and coloured work on the Isthmus, a good augury for the days to come. How often, before my transfer, Ethel and I had to meet building expenses out of our own small income.

Christmas on the Isthmus presented a strange contrast to that at home in Britain where all the trees have lost their leaves, the temperature is often down to freezing and the ground white with snow. In Panama the temperature in the shade is usually about 85 degrees F or above, the verdure is at its grandest, there are no fallen leaves and the tropical growth is dense. As to Christmas Day, it was for me like so many other special days: one service after another from early morning till late at night. On Christmas Day 1907 Ethel

PANAMA PADRE

and Guy hardly saw me, my Christmas with them came afterwards. In the church in Culebra we had a large Christmas tree which was sent to us from the States, it was richly decorated and lit with some 30 differently coloured electric bulbs. Our church was packed to its utmost capacity, over 100 people standing in the aisles while many others had to be turned away. When I switched off the lights in the church and turned on those on the tree the exclamation of one big "Oh!" was unforgettable as our coloured people caught their breath, for they had never seen anything quite like it before. I had imported 300 gifts from Great Britain, a large crateful, for distribution to the Sunday school scholars, but the quantity of gifts proved to be quite insufficient and we had to supplement the amount by purchasing others locally. After the distribution of the gifts from the tree it was dismantled and transported to another of our churches for a similar treat the next evening and this was continued till all our congregations had seen the tree.

Watchnight service was another similar occasion when our Culebra church, and our other churches, used to be full with worshippers over half an hour before it was time to commence the service and there were often as many people outside who were unable to enter the building. After watchnight we began the New Year with a week of prayer which was followed by a week of evangelistic services in all my churches. This week was usually a time of real spiritual harvesting when many came forward and made their profession of faith in Jesus Christ, later being baptised and uniting with the church. It was at one watchnight service that I observed an old negro who was sitting almost directly in front of the platform and who appeared to be the worst for drink. He attracted my attention because he was wearing a lady's green raincoat, or rather the remains of it because it was much worn like the rest of the clothes that he was wearing. At the close of the service, as the crowd was trying to make its way out, he came into the vestry to see me and to tell me that he wanted to give his heart to Jesus Christ; I could hardly take him seriously for he was much under the influence of liquor, so I lectured him well on the evils of drinking and told him that if he would return on Thursday evening I would have another talk with him. To the best of my knowledge I had never seen him before and I had little faith that I would ever see him again; he was an old man who lived some three and a half or four miles back in the jungle in a cabin which was only reached by a most difficult trail running through the bush. To my agreeable surprise he appeared on the Thursday night and re-affirmed his desire to follow Jesus Christ. Night by night he made the difficult and long journey alone, never missing a service, till with real thanksgiving I had the joy of baptising him, with nearly a score of other candidates, at Easter.

We would hold our harvest thanksgiving services in each January or February; any month being suitable in the tropics where all the year round the earth brings forth some of her fruit. Though we had neither wheat nor barley, neither apples nor pears, nature provided us with an abundance of other precious things: bananas and oranges, pineapples and avocado pears, mangos and coconuts, yams and plantains, rice and sugar cane, coffee and cassava, as well as many other fruits and vegetables. It was not an uncommon sight at a harvest thanksgiving service to see a live fowl or two tied by one leg to the pulpit railings; should it be a cock, no one would seem to be the least disturbed by its occasional crowing.

One typical Sunday I conducted the early morning service at our Culebra Penitentiary at 8 a.m. after having visited the men in their community cells. Leaving the prison, I preached at Matachin, 6 miles away, at 11 a.m.; this service was followed by a communion service. Then eating my lunch on the train I retraced my steps, this time to Pedro Miguel, 11 miles in the opposite direction in order to speak at the dedication service in connection with the opening of another Baptist church. After giving an address, and without waiting for the service to finish, I had to hasten away as I had only just time to catch the train for Colon, 40 miles away, where I had promised to preach at night at the Wesleyan church anniversary. I obtained a cup of tea at 9 p.m., the first drink that I had had since leaving home that morning; my thirst in that hot and humid climate can be imagined. I was aroused at 4.30 on Monday morning in Colon by the alarm clock, whereupon I quickly dressed and caught the 5.15 a.m. train for Culebra; at home, which I reached at 7.00 a.m., I had breakfast and was in time to keep an appointment with a man from Panama City who wanted to see me.

While I was conducting a baptismal service at Culebra on Good Friday morning 1908 the news was

PANAMA PADRE

brought to me that our eldest member and deacon, Father Nicholas had died. He had been born in slavery in Jamaica and was ten years old when emancipation took place in 1838. He was a fine type of the old negro and was greatly respected as well as loved by all who knew him. He had been a squatter on Panama Railroad land for at least a quarter of a century, having built his own little cabin in the bush not far from the railway line. When the Railroad Company decided to construct additional tracks just where his hut stood, he and others were given notice to quit. Father Nicholas was greatly distressed for, at the age of eighty two, he was not able to build a new home for himself; he was past work and was largely dependant on charity to keep body and soul together. So I took the matter up with the Superintendent of the Railroad and explained the circumstances. Having heard my story, without any hesitation the Superintendent said that while it was not possible to save old Nicholas' hut as the Railroad must have the ground for the new tracks, he would gladly send some men to build him a new cabin, which I might add proved to be a far better cabin, in which he could spend the rest of his days undisturbed on the one understanding that at his death, as it was the Railroad's property, it was to revert to the Company for demolition. And so Father Nicholas was able to end his days in peace and to enjoy his little cabin rent free. At the close of that baptismal service I announced his death and stated that I would be conducting his funeral service that afternoon at 4 o'clock; at the funeral there was a great concourse of people.

Another loss by death was that at Frijoles of my eldest deacon there. He was an old man and it seems that he was clambering down the railroad embankment at a place where it was very steep in an effort to go down to the river to bathe. Unfortunately he lost his footing and fell, turning a series of somersaults and finally ending with his neck wedged between two rocks; on being freed, he was immediately removed to hospital where he did not survive many hours as it was found that his neck was broken. Some time before the accident I had tried to arrange for him to go to Costa Rica, there to join his son, even promising to assist him financially, but the old man kept putting off his departure with the consequent result. When, some years previously, I had united him in marriage to the partner with whom he had been living for over a score of years, their grown-up children were the bridesmaids and best man and the trainbearers for his bride were their grandchildren.

One morning before dawn I was sent for to visit a small coloured boy, thirteen years old, who was dying; in his delirium in the night he had been repeatedly calling for his "minister". I was soon by his bedside and it was apparent that his life was ebbing fast. When the delirium subsided and his mind became clear, I talked with the little chap and prayed, parting with a cheery good-bye; I had hardly crossed the threshold before he passed away.

With the arrival of so many Americans at Culebra and at the request of some of them, for their special benefit I started a Sunday morning service when Ethel accompanied me and played our portable harmonium. As I preached at the Culebra convict prison, then at Rio Grande at 8 a.m. and had a service for our coloured people at 11 a.m., we had to hold the service for the Americans at 10 o'clock; there was always a good attendance. In the afternoon I conducted a service in the Culebra Hospital and in the evening I preached in one of my other coloured churches. As, in addition, there were frequent weddings and funerals as well as communion services, these had to be timed to take place between my preaching engagements which was not always easy. Hence, when additional ministers arrived on the Isthmus to take up work, I was only too glad to transfer the services for the Americans to their care, thus giving me more time to devote to my coloured congregations.

On Easter Sunday 1909 I held a baptismal service, attended by the usual large and attentive congregation, in the Madinga River during which I baptised 24 candidates. In order to schedule this service in my programme I left home at 4.30 a.m., walking the 5½ miles along the railroad track, so as to be able to commence the service at sunrise because I had to be back at Culebra in time to conduct the penitentiary service at 8 o'clock. It was always thus on Sundays, the day was so full of engagements that often one had not the time to stop and eat.

During 1908 we had 88 additions to our church membership of which 41 were by baptism. In 1909

PANAMA PADRE

there were 101 additions, of which 51 were by baptism, and in 1910 there were 128 additions, of which 67 were by baptism; the differences being accounted for by transfer or restoration. As one new church after another was established, transfers of those removing to the new sphere from other districts naturally took place. During the same period I united numerous couples in marriage: in 1908, 75 couples; in 1909, 84 couples and in 1910, 44 couples.

Towards the end of 1911 we had a delightful visit from Dr BD Gray, Corresponding Secretary of the Home Mission Board. He spent most of his time while on the Isthmus with us, staying at the Mission House and visiting our churches at Culebra, Matachin, and Haut Obispo and the white congregations at Empire and Gorgona which were under the care of the Rev JL Wise. In the Mission House Dr Gray was a charming guest and his visit will long be remembered.

Knowing of my interest in snakes, the Supervisor of the Rio Grande Reservoir, situated about a mile from my Mission House, sent me a young boa emperor that his men had killed while cutting the grass around the reservoir. He had previously placed some large lumps of rock salt near the water's edge for the benefit of the wild deer that regularly resorted there to drink. But he soon found out his mistake, for the snakes liked the rock salt as well as the deer and so many of them were attracted that they not only became a nuisance but a danger to his men who were continuously employed in cutting back the bush that grows so rapidly in the tropical heat; so the rock salt had to go. This boa was only a young one and it measured 6 feet 8 inches in length and from 7 to 7½ inches in girth; it was in magnificent condition and was very fat. The boa emperor usually grows to a larger size than the boa constrictor, the latter measuring about 10 feet, and is common on the Isthmus. When once on board a Royal Mail steamer at Cartagena, Colombia, I was very interested to see on the wharf several natives with sacks from which they wanted to sell something to the passengers who were assembled on the side of the ship, but they failed to find any purchasers. In those sacks were large boa constrictors which had been captured alive; the boa, though, is a non-poisonous snake, it kills its victims either by constricting them or by swallowing them alive.

But to return to the boa emperor, like all members of the constrictor family, it has two tiny claws which are situated one on each side of the vent near the tail and which distinguish the species; these are supposed to be a link connecting the boa with the lizard family, as in the case of the English blindworm. On skinning the example which had been brought to me, I took from its stomach two handfuls of coarse hair and some 41 bones, all in various stages of decomposition caused by the powerful stomach juices which in time would have completely absorbed the bones. The hair and bones looked like those of a large opossum. After having swallowed, the boa would have crawled into the dense undergrowth there to lie in a semi-comatose state for days or even weeks till it had digested its meal, after which it would go in search of another. In this same boa I counted 298 vertebrae and 464 ribs, one of which had been broken and the two pieces beautifully rejoined having been coated with some ossifying substance exuded by nature for that purpose.

Chapter 24

OF BUCCANEERS AND INDIANS

In March 1908 I made my one and only trip to Porto Bello (later known as Portobelo), having obtained permission from the Canal Commission to travel on the tug boat that daily made the 18 mile journey. Also undertaking the day trip with me were Ethel and one of her brothers and one of her sisters who were staying with us. It was Christopher Columbus who "discovered" the place and named it in 1502 and the Spaniards later colonised it; Sir Francis Drake was buried at sea near Porto Bello during January 1596.

Porto Bello was the Atlantic terminus of El Camino Real, the old Royal Road, though but a cobbled trail, along which the pack trains composed of mules and men conveyed the gold and spoils of Peru from Old Panama to the King's storehouses at Porto Bello. Here, twice a year, the fleets of Spain came to take away the "King's Treasure" safely, if possible, from the cupidity of the buccaneers; but this was not easy because of the vigilance of the foe. At Porto Bello may still be seen a 400 year old stockade and the remains of several old Spanish forts and castles that were in turn captured by Buccaneer Morgan and his men in 1668. It was here that Morgan, having made several attempts to capture a castle that the Spanish Governor was desperately defending, resolved to make use of scaling ladders and, to accomplish this, placed both priests and nuns against the walls of the castle believing that the Governor would rather deliver the castle than expose these religious persons to certain death. However, Morgan was mistaken; from the turrets of the castle the Spaniards hurled down fire-balls, stones and earthen pots filled with exploding gunpowder. Many priests and nuns were killed before Morgan and his men succeeded in placing their scaling ladders against the walls and in capturing the town of Porto Bello. Esquemeling, the Dutch apothecary, was present at the destruction of the town and in his book, "The Buccaneers of America", he gives a graphic account of the final capture of Porto Bello and tells us how the buccaneers burnt many of the buildings, pillaged the storehouses and murdered many of the inhabitants. The town was again captured by the British in 1739 during the war with Spain and again by Admiral Vernon in 1742; it was the immense wealth of gold that attracted the cupidity of the buccaneers and caused the town to be frequently attacked. Porto Bello continued to be the landing point for overland travellers until the opening of the Panama Railroad in 1855.

But if the English went to Porto Bello to take away gold, the Americans went there to bring away rock; for much of the stone that was used in the manufacture of the concrete that in turn was used in the construction of the locks and spillway for the Canal was brought from Porto Bello in barges. I, myself, during my visit to Porto Bello, brought away as a souvenir a large cannon ball, weighing about 40 pounds, which I took from a pile of them in one of the ancient forts. The rubble, to which once great buildings were reduced, can still be found in the town.

Lying 18 miles east of Porto Bello, and 35 miles from Colon, is the historic old village of Nombre de Dios, the oldest Spanish settlement on the Isthmus and one of the oldest in the New World. In 1502 Columbus, when exploring the Caribbean coast, entered the harbours of both Nombre de Dios and Porto Bello. Eight years later, Diego de Nicuesa, accompanied by 700 fellow Spaniards, set out to colonise Nombre de Dios but he lost several of his ships and many of his people in a severe storm when almost in sight of his goal. On the subsidence of the storm he sought and entered the harbour, landed and raised the Spanish flag as he took possession in the name of the King of Spain; at the same time he gave to the place its

PANAMA PADRE

present name of Nombre de Dios, "In the Name of God". The first Governor of the colony of Nombre de Dios was Vasco Nunez de Balbao.

Here the Isthmian Canal Commission, after being refused permission by the San Blas Indians to purchase and remove some of their sand near the entrance to the Atrato River, came to an arrangement with the Panamanian government to obtain sand. The sand, also required for the manufacture of concrete that was to be used in the construction of the Canal, was suction dredged and the dredgers made two interesting historical finds. The first was during September 1910 when, in the sand zone some 300 feet inland from the beach and at a depth of from 18 to 20 feet below the surface of the ground, the hulk of a wreck several centuries old was found. The length of the ship was 60 feet and its timbers were apparently of oak and held together by wooden pins. In the vicinity of the wreck the suction dredge drew up several hundred pounds of iron, some pieces weighing as much as 40 pounds, and a quantity of slugs and bullets which may have belonged to the magazine of the ship. The dredge also encountered many pieces of hard mortar similar to that seen on the Isthmus in the ruins of buildings constructed by the early Spaniards; much of it was found in and around the iron work of the ship including the hollow parts of a series of iron posts. Eight months later a second wreck was found, this one was about 100 feet in length, was at a point about 250 feet inside the shore line and was buried in the sand some 20 feet below the surface. The pumps drew up a small figurehead in brass, an iron pestle and a large number of lead bullets which were from three-quarters to two inches in diameter.

For 150 years Old Panama had been the greatest, richest and most prosperous city in the new world but this once flourishing Spanish city, founded in 1515, was so completely destroyed by Buccaneer Morgan and his men on 21st January 1671 that it was never rebuilt. The site was abandoned and the present city of Panama, seven miles away across Las Sabanas (the savannas), arose in its stead. Esquemeling was also an eye-witness of the capturing and burning of Old Panama. That Morgan with a force of some 1200 men should march across the Isthmus and, after nine days of severe hunger and hardship due to the Spaniards having laid waste the country between Cruces and Old Panama, should then defeat and make flee an armed force of some 2800 Spaniards, four hundred of whom were mounted on horses, was a remarkable achievement. The Spaniards lost some 600 men and Morgan some 200 men in this attack. For over two and a half centuries Old Panama lay hidden in dense undergrowth and jungle; it had become almost a forgotten city. However, in 1911, through the enterprise of the New Republic, a road was built from the city of Panama across Las Sabanas to the old city. There the bush and dense undergrowth were cut away using prisoners as labour and the few remaining old walls, Morgan's Bridge and the ruins of the Tower of San Jerome of the Church of San Anastasia were exposed and made accessible to the public view. That there were not more ruins is because most of the houses had been built of wood and only the church and a few official buildings constructed of rubble or stone; hence the complete obliteration of streets. If old walls and ground once soaked with blood could tell their tales, what a story of savage and wanton destruction with reckless bloodshed could be told.

To see the few remaining ruins of Old Panama Ethel and I, baby Guy and one of Ethel's sisters who was staying with us engaged a horse drawn coach to take us the seven miles. On the way we passed the native village of Pueblo Nueva where later a small Baptist church was started by the Rev JJ Pinnock, at one time a missionary in the Congo. It was in Pueblo Nueva that a building, which at one time served as a cuartel, was converted into the village schoolhouse, but, for some unexplained reason, the old village stocks were left behind. By securing the feet of unruly or disobedient children the school teacher found the stocks to be a very useful instrument of punishment till one day somebody ventilated the subject in a Panama newspaper. This caused a storm of indignation with the result that the education authorities speedily ordered the discontinuance of the practice. On our arrival at the old city we at once tried to obtain some drinking water for we were very thirsty, but the whole neighbourhood was uninhabited; eventually we were successful in discovering a native hut, but the only occupant, a negro, had no water. However, he promptly suggested that we might like some coconut milk instead and, quickly placing his machete between his teeth

PANAMA PADRE

and being unencumbered with much clothing, he soon climbed a coconut tree with hands and bare feet. He removed several large coconuts, descended the tree and, with surprising skill and speed, he quickly cut off the outer husks with his machete; after cutting holes in the nuts he filled the cups that we had brought with us with the milk: a most refreshing drink.

We made our way into the ruins of the old church and were grateful for the shade that it provided; there we hung a small hammock that we had brought with us, in which to place baby Guy whilst we were engaged in preparing a picnic meal. A chameleon flitted about on the wall of the church. After wandering about in search of the few remaining pieces of old walls of historic interest, we set out on our return journey during which a small boa constrictor measuring about three yards in length crossed the road in front of our coach; it is not possible to be accurate in giving the length of a snake when it is seen in motion. On the savannas I observed a number of skeletons of cattle which had perished during the drought of the dry season; the buzzards had done their work well and had left nothing behind but the bones to bleach in the hot sun. One was surprised that the owners of the cattle had not made some effort to save their beasts either by conveying water to them or by driving them to where they could obtain it. Unfortunately the heat of the tropics is not inducive to the native to over exert himself.



Island of Taboga, Panama.

Lying in Panama Bay, some twelve miles from Panama City, is the delectable island of Taboga which is four miles in length and two in breadth. It was to this island that Don Francisco de Peralta fled on board a Spanish galleon, the "Trinity", to escape from Buccaneer Morgan. De Peralta took with him from Old Panama 1500 people including all the friars and nuns as well as taking all the church plate of gold and silver, all the King's plate and large amounts of money and jewels. Taboga and Taboguilla (little Taboga) were both visited in 1680 by Buccaneer Morgan and his men who found in the harbours a number of small vessels laden with many sorts of merchandise; Morgan took possession of the vessels and sailed them to Old

PANAMA PADRE

Panama. True to their reputation, during their brief stay on Taboga, some of the buccaneers, being drunk, set fire to a dozen of the houses and upon leaving the island they took with them an abundant supply of fowls and hogs. A four centuries old Roman Catholic church still exists on Taboga island, it is claimed to be the oldest church building on the American continent.

Taboga is served by a launch that makes the trip three times a week carrying passengers and supplies. En route the launch passes near the Islands of Naos; Perico; Flaminco and Culebra, the quarantine station for the Pacific side, and it frequently calls at Palo Seco, the leper colony. As long ago as 1885 the French Canal Company saw the suitability of Taboga for the erection of a Sanatorium for convalescent employees, the climate there being more invigorating than that of the mainland. Remarkably the rainfall on the island is about half that of Ancon, twelve miles away; hence the atmosphere is much drier and the climate much more bracing. The Sanatorium has accommodation for some 70 patients but, when necessary, is capable of holding 90; when the construction of the Canal was taken over by the United States, the Americans were not slow to see the importance of the Sanatorium at Taboga and they soon refurbished it. Taboga is famous for its clear water and good sea bathing and its pineapples and other fruit that are cultivated by the natives. Here employees of the Canal Commission are able to spend their holidays and honeymoons.

In February 1917, when Ethel and our two boys were badly needing a change and a holiday, I took advantage of an opportunity to take them to Taboga for ten days; this holiday did us all a lot of good. Almost daily we hired a small native boat of which we made use for sea bathing and on the last day of our holiday the Superintendent of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company very generously placed his launch at our disposal to take us to Taboguilla, a few miles away. All went well at the start, but no sooner did we round Taboga headland than we encountered rough seas which constantly broke over and into our little boat which seemed like a cockleshell on the Pacific. I was very anxious that we should be able to reach, and land on, the island, but the sea became so rough that a wave successfully made our gasoline engine stop. At this we were much pitched and tossed about; when our boatman at last succeeded in restarting the engine my desire to continue the journey was outvoted by a general clamour from my family to return to calmer waters. During this trip we had the interesting experience of seeing a school of whales spouting. A month later all the guests at the hotel where we had been staying were abruptly evacuated, for, the United States having entered the Great War, all the Germans on the Isthmus were rounded up and sent to the Sanatorium where they were interned.

The Indians of Panama are no mere myth but are the descendants of the aboriginal tribes that were found by the Spaniards when they first landed in Central America. In build the Indians are mostly short stocky men whose average height is just over five feet. They are shapely and well muscled, with small hands and feet and, like all primitive people who go barefoot and carry burdens, they have stubby spreading toes. In colour they are light brown or coppery; they have round heads and faces, black hair and dark eyes. Amongst them are to be found genuine albinos with black hair and grey eyes. Many of the men wear heavy gold plate earrings; while their women wear gaily coloured, intricately designed and embroidered garments and for ornaments the women wear necklaces, gold earrings and nose-rings, removing the last-named when eating.

The Panamanian Indians may be classed in three groups:

- (1) The Guaymi, or Guaymies, who inhabit the provinces of Veraguas, Chiriqui and Bocas del Toro; also included are the Talamanca Indians on the border with Costa Rica.
- (2) The Cuna-Cuna people, far better known on the Isthmus as the San Blas Indians, who call themselves the Tule people (Tule translates as men or the men) and who comprise tribes which include the Manzanilles, the Mandingas, the Bayanos, etc. They inhabit 45 scattered villages of Indian huts in a territory that stretches from the Black Rock (Point San Blas) to the Atrato River, the

PANAMA PADRE

San Blas coast, and includes an archipelago of islands and the coast and mainland of the Gulf of Darien.

- (3) The Chocoos, or Chocanos, who inhabit the Sambu and Taimati Valleys from Garachine Point and extending into Colombian territory.

Of these the most numerous are the San Blas Indians; at the time of construction of the Canal they numbered 50,000 but they claim to have numbered between one and 1½ million before the Spaniards came to their country over four centuries ago. The coming of the Spaniards to the Isthmus was a cruel tragedy for the Indians who welcomed them with open arms thinking the Europeans to be God-men in the likeness of A-oba, their legendary teacher and law-maker, who was traditionally believed to be white. The Spaniards' ships, armour, guns and their white complexions set them apart in the Indian mind as super-beings. Hence, the Indians received their visitors with friendship and joy; indeed Balboa, the European discoverer of the Pacific, was given, as wife, the beautiful daughter of one of the leading chiefs. It was the San Blas Indians who led Balboa and his followers by the jungle trails to the Pacific Ocean. After the Spaniards beached their ships at Cruces, the furthest navigable point on the Chagres River, and dismantled them it was the San Blas Indians who were compelled to carry the heavy timbers on their shoulders through the virgin forests in order that the ships could be reconstructed on the shores of the Pacific. But it was the Spaniards who developed an insatiable greed for the Indians' gold ornaments and a fiendish ruthlessness in acquiring them; the bodies of Indians slain in battle were despoiled, Indian villages were ravaged and burnt and Indian women were violated.

Thousands of the Indians were killed for the sake of their golden trinkets, so it was not long before the Tule people's conception of the Spaniards as God-men became changed to that of Devil-men. In their bitterness and hatred, goaded by the memory of their slain people and devastated country, the Indians killed all their women who had been violated by the Spaniards and killed the children of these women. At the same time, in their frenzy, they even turned against the white Indian people, who claimed to be the direct descendants of the ancient Mayan race and, because the Mayans resembled the hated invader, killed all who resembled the Spaniards or drove them from their midst. But the Mayan type was so firmly established in the Indian blood that continually white children were born of brown parents in most of the families and, so deeply rooted had become the aversion of the Indians to all white people, as these children were born they were killed; happily this practice has now ceased. Thus through centuries these Tule people have preserved the purity of their race and kept their country inviolate by allowing no white man or negro to remain ashore within their territory at night. They are strictly monogamous, personal chastity and conjugal fidelity being inculcated and practised by the people to an extraordinarily high degree; social disease is unknown among them. The women and children are protected and not oppressed and are treated with high honour and respect. Their standards of honesty and truthfulness are much higher than that of many other peoples with whom they have come into contact. As to their beliefs, they believe in angels, good and evil spirits and the God-man teacher, whom they call A-oba, and they have traditions of the Garden of Eden and the Universal Flood.

The San Blas Indians live principally on fish, turtle meat and a few native vegetables; they have no cattle, so meat as we know it is unknown. Their trade is principally in coconuts, but also in tortoise-shells and rubber. Being excellent seamen, they bring their goods along the coast in dug-out canoes to Colon, which is at least 50 miles from the San Blas coast and where I have often seen them.

An English lady, Miss Annie Coope, managed to obtain permission in February 1913 from Chief Charlie Robinson, who had obtained his education in the United States, to open a school on the Island of Nirgana. Miss Coope had made a previous attempt in 1909 to open schools at two of the Indian villages but had not been allowed to stay; in succeeding this time she became the first woman missionary to gain a foothold amongst these Indians. Two centuries before, Jesuit missionaries had made an attempt to

PANAMA PADRE

evangelise the Darien, but few Indians would listen to them. After Miss Coope's measure of success, Roman Catholic priests followed, but their coming only resulted in trouble; finally Miss Coope herself had to withdraw much to the regret of the parents of her pupils.

Since 1913 there has been trouble of a much more serious kind. The Panamanian government has tried to open up the country by sending to some of the islands detachments of armed negroid police who have been responsible for creating much bitterness and strife. The police fined some of the Indians and threw others into prison for the most trifling offences and those who resisted were shot; when the Chief of a village was deposed the Officers in charge of the police assumed the title. The Indians were conscripted for labour and were compelled to build schoolhouses and a jail; no longer was the Indian allowed to sell his goods how and where he pleased, he was compelled to sell to the local government authorities or their agents and in so doing he was robbed and cheated. The Indians' land was sold over their heads and without their consent to companies by the Panamanian government; land which had belonged to their ancestors from time immemorial and which was now to be exploited for the sole benefit of the purchasers. The first Spaniards cruelly oppressed the Indians; their descendants are equally guilty, but in another way. One can hardly wonder that the Indian, instead of welcoming the coming of the white man and his coloured ally, has learned to distrust and dread them as the cause of much misery and unhappiness.

The San Blas Indian is not averse to the establishment of schools adapted to his people, to the giving of guarantees of freedom of religious worship and to the opening of his country to international intercourse and trade, but he insists that his people, the Tule people, shall be free to enjoy autonomous self-government and shall retain sovereignty of their own land.

Chapter 25

IN A CONVICT PRISON

Within a few months of the opening of a convict prison in the newly established Canal Zone, I started to undertake the work of conducting services for the benefit of the convicts and found the work to be both interesting as well as encouraging. Initially the prisoners were housed at Empire, but it was not long before they were transferred to Culebra (Rio Grande) where two large buildings were erected for their accommodation and for the Police Station; the buildings were surrounded by a double barbed wire stockade.

Here every Sunday morning at 8.00 I would visit the cells, each of which contained a number of men of which the more desperate would be wearing chains. The services were conducted in the large dining hall where we had an average attendance of over 100 convicts and some ten warders. At first I had to provide my own baby harmonium that was carried by my coloured man and that was played by Ethel; but I was soon able to raise enough money to purchase a small organ and hymn books for the exclusive use of the prisoners. The prison authorities allowed me a great deal of freedom in visiting the men, I would be locked up with them in their cells which resembled cages; some cells held as many as 20 prisoners and all were fitted with bunk beds. I used to converse with the men and supply them with tracts and magazines; during the week the convicts were usually engaged in road building, being brought back to the penitentiary to sleep at night. Later, as the number of convicts increased, new temporary prison camps, also surrounded by barbed wire stockades, were built at Brazos Brook, Gold Hill and Mandinga River. I also visited these prison camps and held frequent services for the men at the latter two camps. Most of the men who were engaged in road making in the jungle had to wear a heavy iron ball attached by a chain to the leg while at work; only a few good conduct men, "trustees" as they were called, were exempted from this ordeal.

Many and interesting were the individual cases that I came across. I used to have a personal interview with each new prisoner on his arrival after being sentenced; it was a common saying that on arrival 90% claimed to be innocent while 10% acknowledged their guilt, but before their sentence had expired 90% had admitted to their guilt while 10% still persisted in claiming that they were innocent. To give a simple illustration: as I was entering the jail at Culebra one day, a black man who proudly answered to the name of John White was just coming from the court where he had been given a short sentence for drunkenness. I knew John well as I had frequently seen him in prison for the same offence, so I asked him what the trouble had been this time. As he was confessing to me, the American police officer said to him, "John, why did you plead 'Not guilty' when you knew that you were drunk?" John was caught off his guard and quite innocently answered the officer, "Because I thought that the judge would give me a lighter sentence, Boss". His was a typical admission of guilt. However, it was the last sentence for drunkenness that John served, he became a changed man soon after and gave up alcohol; indeed I had the joy of baptising him and of receiving him into our church at Culebra. He remained a faithful and consistent member till some years later when he passed away and I had to lay his poor body to rest.

Another example of this admission of guilt was that of a coloured man who was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment for an unnameable offence. When I talked with him he persisted in declaring his innocence, asserting that it was some persons having a grudge against him who had concocted the story. I had been able to help two or three convicts to obtain pardons where there was special merit in their cases, so he pleaded with me, for the sake of his delicate wife and children at home, to intercede with the Governor on

PANAMA PADRE

his behalf as he was the bread-winner and he now feared that his family would starve. One rather became accustomed to some of these stories, so it was always necessary to proceed cautiously. The following Sunday I met my faithful worker Henry Clarke, who has a fine Christian character, and I asked him to go the next day to Paraiso and go to the tenement building where the man's wife and children lived, to mix among the neighbours and to find out for me how his wife and children were placed and if they were really in want.

It was several days before Henry and I met again, when the following conversation took place:

SML: "Well Henry, how did you find things?"

Henry: "Why Minister, nothing better ever happened".

SML: "What do you mean?"

Henry: "His being sent to prison".

SML: "Why, in what way?"

Henry: "Well Minister, the neighbours say he was no good, he did little or no work, spending most of his time in the saloon or gambling, while his poor wife had to work by doing washing to support him and the children, and when she got paid he would take the money from her by force and gamble with it; now while he is in prison she will have a little peace".

The man again at different intervals repeated his appeal to me to intervene on his behalf. I became rather weary of it, so one day about a year later, when he again broached the subject, I really felt annoyed and so I said to him:-

"Look here, if I were in your place I would not accept a pardon even if the Governor offered it to me".

On the prisoner asking why, I stated:

"Because you have been telling me every time that you are an innocent man and are only here because you were falsely accused. Well, a pardon means that you accept the clemency of the Governor for something that you have done. But you have been telling me all this time that you are innocent and never did it; then if such is the case I would refuse a pardon and expect the Governor to come and express his regret for illegally detaining you in custody for something that you have never done and for which you should have been set free. No, I would not accept a pardon at any price".

He saw my point and his mistake and immediately changed his tune:

"But Minister, I did do it".

To which I replied:

"Then why have you been posing all this time as an innocent man and one who has been falsely accused?"

He could not answer; he had thought that by his change of front that he might gain his point.

In the early days no provision had been made for convicts to be provided with money when discharged, so that when deported or set free, unless they could borrow or obtain credit, they were exposed to the temptation to steal until they were in receipt of their first wages, for they must have food. This difficulty I was able to overcome in a small way by securing gifts of cash from American friends and giving to each man a small amount when he was discharged. The same difficulty also had to be met in the matter of clothes, especially in the case of men who arrived in prison ill clad or who had served a long term and whose civilian clothes had suffered in consequence. Here again I had cause to thank many American friends for providing me often with excellent suits of clothes which I was able to pass on to the more deserving causes. These problems were later overcome on my representing the matter to the Governor who introduced a system providing every man who had served six or more months with a suit of clothes and US\$20 (£4) on being released.

Another matter that I brought to the notice of the Governor was the absence of any inducement to a prisoner to behave himself and earn a reward for good conduct by the shortening of his sentence. As a result of my letter to the Governor, enquiries were made as to the different methods adopted in some of the prisons in the United States. The outcome was that the Governor introduced an excellent accumulative system with a graded reduction of sentence commencing with two weeks remission on the first six months and increasing to one month remission on the first year; one month plus two making three months remission on the second

PANAMA PADRE

year; one plus two plus three making six months remission on the third year; and so on such that a convict who had been sentenced to 21 years, if well behaved could reduce his sentence by as much as nine years and three months, something well worth while. Other privileges for good behaviour were exemption from wearing the ball and chain when at work, being provided with a grey suit instead of the usual zebra stripes and that of being assigned to one of the softer jobs in the kitchen and elsewhere instead of heavy manual labour on the roads.

On 4th July, American Independence Day; on Thanksgiving Day; on Christmas Day and on Easter Day many of the American ladies made and gave cakes and other good things to eat for the benefit of the prisoners who were able to celebrate by enjoying a special feast. To give one instance; it was Christmas Day and the large dining hall where I held services was tastefully decorated with an abundance of palm branches, flowers, flags, etc. The service was at 8.30 a.m. and we had a number of the Sunday school children (white) from the Commission church who came to sing two of their special Christmas pieces; this was followed by a solo which was sung by an American lady and a short Christmas address given by myself. The prisoners then sat down to enjoy a sumptuous breakfast supplemented by large cakes, ice creams and other good things all made and provided by the ladies.

During the building of the Camacho Reservoir, one of the convicts who was working in a quarry suddenly attacked his warder. In the fight they fell together and it was said that the convict, being on top, was about to use his heavy iron ball on chain to kill the warder beneath him. Another warder who was stationed on top of the quarry, grasping the situation and realising that it was a matter of life or death, took the risk and fired; he shot the convict dead and, in so doing, saved his colleague's life. But for the accuracy of his shooting, the shot might have just as easily caused the death of his fellow warder.

In the early days raising the amount that was written on pay-cheques was a common offence. The judges determined to try to end this practice by giving severe sentences to the forgers who were mostly coloured men. The forgeries were childish in the extreme; supposing a man was entitled to a wage of, for example, \$47.50, this amount would be stated on the pay-cheque both in words and in figures as on an ordinary cheque. The culprit would not think of adding to or altering the amount as stated in words, but he would add the figure 1 in front of the number 47.50, thereby making the amount \$147.50. The paymaster knew that few, if any, coloured men received such a wage and he only had to read the amount in words to see that the cheque was a clumsy forgery; hence, then and there, the paymaster would hand the culprit over to the police guard. One of the first to be thus sentenced for this child-like offence was given four years, but when others later received only two, and even one year, for the same offence, I discussed the matter with the Judge of the Supreme Court who had originally given the four-year sentence and drew his attention to the disparity in sentences. "Yes I know, Mr Loveridge. When I gave the heavier sentence it was in the hope of putting an end to the raising of these pay-cheques, but as we found that it made no difference I have since been giving milder sentences". "Well, Judge", I said, "since you sentenced X, several other men, who had been sent up for the same offence, have served their time and have been discharged. If I put in an application to the Governor for the release of X, will you endorse it?" He promised and I was able to obtain the release of X after he had served two years instead of the original four.

Of murderers, I had contact with over thirty, including the murderer of a Mafia gangster. Some of the murders were definitely premeditated and dastardly, while others were committed on the impulse of the moment and could hardly be placed in the same category. During my service as Chaplain only three murderers were executed because some astute lawyer had discovered that, under an old Colombian law that had not yet been abrogated, if a man pleaded guilty he could not be hanged, but could only receive life imprisonment. Of this loophole full advantage was taken till, by Executive Order in 1909, the law was amended to include the death penalty in the Canal Zone. Though the three murderers who were executed had pleaded "Not guilty" at their trials, each, after having been sentenced to death, later acknowledged his guilt to me and even described to me the circumstances under which he had committed his crime. But had each one pleaded guilty at his trial, he would not have been hanged as the law then stood. Many were the

PANAMA PADRE

hours that I spent with these three men in conversation, Bible reading and prayer. I have little reason to doubt that two of the men really became changed; of the third, a Spaniard, I could not be so sure. One of the men begged me to accompany him to the gallows, a request that I could not refuse, so I was with him to the end; had I wished I could have been with the other two, but without a special request I declined. When I visited the second man, a Barbadian, to pray with him for the last time, he took off his gold ring and asked me to send it to his mother with the request that she would warn all his old companions, who before he had come to the Isthmus had shared with him in his youthful follies, of the consequences of leading a sinful life. One man, whom I knew well and who had received a life sentence under the old Colombian law, was an absolute mental degenerate. It was known that he was guilty of more than one murder, but when dying in the prison encampment near the Mandinga River, he confessed to the police officer who was with him that he had committed murder no less than six times. Though I had had many talks with him, I never felt that I had made any impression.

When the Empire to Chorrera Highway was being built a prison camp was erected some four miles beyond Empire, near the Mandinga River, in order to save bringing the prisoners back to the Culebra Convict Prison after they had finished their work each day. The camp housed 140 prisoners and their guards and to reach it one had to pass through the densest tropical jungle, making use of the partly built trail, much of which ran through deep mud. The camp itself was located near the boundary of the Canal Zone and was built of bush poles (trees in the rough), old corrugated iron, barbed wire and mosquito screening. To this camp I made more than one trip to visit the men and to hold services.

My first journey there was unforgettable; I was on horseback, the only means of transport, and I had no sooner started than it just poured and poured with rain as only happens in the tropics. In order to save time I took a narrow trail that ran through the bush and that would join the new road further on; this detour involved riding my horse through several small streams and over a couple of small native bridges that consisted of two planks each laid side by side. When at last I reached the cleared site of the new highway I found it impossible to make use of it as it was bedded with large and small rough stones on which my horse was unable to find a firm footing. Hence, I had to ride on the side of the road through the deep mud that at times reached up to my horse's knees. When I reached the point where construction of the road finished I had to take the trail that plunged into the jungle; here the extent of the mud had to be seen to be understood, every step that the horse took sent the mud up over me in showers till even my best friends would hardly have recognised me. Conditions were, of course, greatly aggravated by the heavy rain and, as the overhanging trees and creepers effectively hid the sun, it was almost impossible for the trail to dry.

Up hills and down gulleys; across streams where often it was necessary to dismount and lead the way; ever on, floundering through the endless bogs of mud till at last I began to think that I must have missed my way and overrun the camp by a couple of miles. When I came to some native huts, being able to make the occupants understand what I was seeking, I learned that the camp was still some distance on. Eventually I met an American woman, riding astride, who was returning from a visit to her husband who was one of the prisoners; from her I learned that I still had about a mile to go. I could not but admire her courage to have attempted the journey, for, like myself, she was literally covered with mud from head to foot. On arriving at last at the camp I received a very warm welcome from the police officers as well as from the prisoners who seemed quite glad to see me. Though the officers kindly wanted to provide me with a meal, I had to decline because it had taken me two hours to make the journey and I had to be at Haut Obispo in time to preach at 7.00 p.m.; so, as I had no time to lose, the men were at once assembled and I held a service. I must have looked a strange sight, being covered with mud, but any attempt to rid myself of it would only have been a waste of time as I had to return along the same jungle trail. That visit to the prison camp was well worth the effort, I did not regret it at all.

The convicts at Culebra were later transferred to a new prison camp at Gamboa on the relocated railroad line and one mile from the railroad station. As I could ill afford the time on Sundays to walk the mile from the station I was able to obtain, thanks to the Governor, a special order for the early morning train

PANAMA PADRE

on Sundays to slow down at the prison camp to allow me to jump off; this privilege continued for as long as I was on the Isthmus. After visiting the men in their community cages, all would meet in the large dining hall where I held a service; as soon as the service was over the police launch, with an armed American police officer in charge and a couple of convicts to operate it, would take me a couple of miles up the Canal to my next preaching appointment. Occasionally, however, the police launch had to be taken on some urgent mission to investigate some crime committed either along the Canal or up one of the tributary rivers of the Gatun Lake. At such times a Martiniquais prisoner, who was serving ten years for murder, would be sent to row me across the Canal and a short distance up the Obispo River, through the jungle away from any human habitation, to a spot where I could climb up the bank and from where I could take a trail that led to the old railroad line. From there, making my way on foot, I would go to Las Cascadas. On parting from my boatman, who was always dressed in the usual prison garb, I would make signs for him to go straight back, which he always did.

Some men used to take it for granted that it was their inalienable right to beat their wives when the wives did anything to displease them and they could not understand why the judge should punish them for so doing. There was the case of a coloured West Indian policeman who had a long and good record till one day he brutally beat his wife, for which he was charged and risked thirty days in prison. His wife was a pitiful object when I saw her stretched on a cot with her head badly battered; I think that only the thickness of her skull saved her life. For this she took proceedings to try to obtain a legal separation, there being no provision for divorce in the Canal Zone. As usual it fell to my lot to try to bring about a reconciliation, it was not easy but finally she consented to forgive if not to forget; then I persuaded them to shake hands while I prayed that they might be able to keep their promise and to lead a better life. As the case was to be tried the following day, I compiled a paper, for them both to sign, in which it was asked that the case might be allowed to be withdrawn; copies were placed in the hands of both Judge and lawyer. A day or two later I had a similar case to deal with.

I was going to the Gold Hill Stockade on the east bank of the Canal one Saturday in order to conduct a service for some convicts who were temporarily quartered there and, as I was making my way along a little used old railroad track which belonged to the Canal, I saw in front of me the biggest snake that I have ever met at large, and I have met a good few. Our railroad tracks were the old broad gauge which is hardly to be found anywhere else in the world and measured five feet in width; as this snake, when crossing, had from three to four feet on the one side of the track and about the same length on the other side, I estimated that it could not be much less than from 12 to 13 feet in length, while in circumference it was as big as my leg above the knee. Could I kill it? I do not think that I am exaggerating when I say that I killed some hundreds of snakes during my sojourn in Panama, the record being about eight in one week, these being found beneath the Mission House which was built above the ground, but that record was quite an exception. On this occasion, however, I had nothing in my hands save my Bible and a handful of tracts for distribution among the prisoners after the service and even these could not harm an old serpent. So I waited a moment till the snake had nearly disappeared in the long grass leaving only a foot or two of its tail exposed, whereupon I made for the Stockade which was not more than 50 yards away and called to the coloured warder on duty at the gate to summon the American police officer in charge to come quickly as there was a large snake outside. Within less time than it takes to tell, he arrived and together, he with his loaded revolver in one hand, we plunged into the long grass which was more than knee deep but, though we beat the grass over quite a large area, no snake was to be seen or found. The Officer was disappointed, he told me that the same snake had been seen in the vicinity on two or three previous occasions but it had always vanished before anyone could approach close enough to kill it.

Towards the close of 1919 I lodged an application with the Governor for the release of prisoner number 656, a Barbadian, who had received a sentence of 21 years for murder. There were mitigating circumstances concerning the crime of prisoner 656, it was not pre-meditated and some of the evidence was questionable. During his imprisonment prisoner 656 became a changed man; he played the harmonium for

PANAMA PADRE

me at prison services and even conducted prayer meetings in the Penitentiary on his own initiative with some of his fellow prisoners. He was a good conduct man and held the respect of the Police Officers. Just before my departure from the Isthmus I received a reply from Lieutenant-Colonel Chester Harding notifying me that prisoner 656 would be duly pardoned, effective on 1st January 1920; he would then have served eight years and nine months of his sentence of 21 years. This became nearly my last accomplishment on the Isthmus.

In dealing with convicts there is a need for deep human sympathy and understanding. Of course not all criminals are in prison; there are many at large in any country and, because they happen to have been a little clever in covering up their tracks, they have escaped justice. Many, especially the negro prisoners, were by nature not criminally disposed; but in a moment of weakness, or in a burst of temper, or in a sudden desire for revenge yielded to temptation for which they had to repent at leisure. The way to reach and help them is not by meeting them as superior but as man to man. I often think of the words of the old martyr, John Bradford, who suffered for his faith at Smithfield in 1556 and who, when seeing a man one day with his hands tied to the back of a cart and being led forth to die, is said to have exclaimed, "There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God". It is not that we ourselves are better than others.

Chapter 26

MUD SLIDES

Soon after my marriage in 1905 the demolition of the old village of Culebra began, while almost simultaneously the new town was springing up with mushroom growth. The American scheme for the Canal provided for a much deeper and wider channel for the passage of larger ships than was ever contemplated by the French 25 years before; this necessitated encroachment on the West bank at Culebra and with it the disappearance of the native town which finally disappeared in March 1907. Steam shovels were put to work cutting into the hillside almost faster than the people could pull down and remove their humble dwellings, while our church building was also amongst those condemned shortly to disappear. With characteristic American efficiency the dawn of 1906 saw the pace of Canal excavation and construction improve. Supplies of machinery and equipment on an immense scale were obtained and were daily landed on the Isthmus; while the housing, clothing and feeding of over 10,000 employees (later increased to 45,000) was logistically a vast undertaking.

The great Bucyrus steam shovels were introduced and set to work. It can be said that the Bucyrus steam shovel made the Canal possible; hence, a few facts concerning this machine will not be amiss. The greatest amount of rock and earth excavated by one Bucyrus steam shovel in a single day was 8395 tons; while the greatest amount of rock and earth excavated from the Canal in one day was 127,742 tons, in the excavation of which 51 steam shovels and two steam cranes were employed and this spoil was loaded into 333 trains carrying an average of over 600 tons each. The average distance over which the trains carried the spoil to the dumps was 12 miles. The five cubic yard bucket of the steam shovel weighs 2½ tons itself and has a lifting capacity of from 75,000 to 84,000 pounds; hence, the bucket when full carries 8.7 tons of rock or 6.7 tons of earth, the average being 8.03 tons of what is known as "the run of the Canal". If a slide should unexpectedly come down during the excavation, partially wrecking or overturning a steam shovel or derailling a spoil train, as so often happened, instantly a wrecking train would be despatched from Gorgona and, if necessary, another from Colon, to the scene of the accident. The locomotives were always under steam and the crews always on stand-by; the wrecking train had right of way and precedence over all other traffic so that work on the Canal might not be delayed an hour longer than absolutely necessary. During the busiest years of Canal excavation an average of six million pounds of dynamite was used in blasting rock each year; 25 tons of dynamite have, on more than one occasion, been exploded at a time.

In the early days many of the spoil trains had to be unloaded by the slow process of pick and shovel, but this practice soon gave place to the use of an ingenious device, called a plough, which weighed between 14 and 60 tons. This plough was attached to the end of a Ledgerwood train of flat cars and connected by a steel cable to a winding drum next to the locomotive at the other end; on the drum being set in motion the cable drew the plough from one end of the train to the other, dislodging some 600 tons of rock and earth in seven to fifteen minutes. As soon as the train was empty, it departed and another powerful machine, called a spreader and drawn by a locomotive, appeared. This machine had a great knife-like blade, weighing several tons, which was lowered. As the locomotive moved along, the spreader would level and pitch down the embankment the heaped earth and rock which had just been dumped by the Ledgerwood train. This accomplished, another apparatus, called a track-shifter and comprising a powerful crane with chains and hooks, would arrive and bodily move outwards, often to the distance of 9 feet, a section of the track onto the newly levelled dump thus making ready for the next spoil train to dispose of its load. So

PANAMA PADRE

efficient were these track-shifters that one of them would accomplish the feat of moving one and a quarter miles of track a distance of 12 feet from its original position in one hour and fifty minutes; twenty men thus undertaking that which, ordinarily without the aid of the track-shifter, it would have required 600 men to accomplish.

As construction developed, as many as 160 spoil trains a day, loaded with earth and rock, travelled an average distance of 12 miles to the spoil dumps where they discharged their loads. This figure, however, was completely overtaken when, on a single day in March 1910, more than double that number of loaded trains, with an equal number empty, made their way to and from the spoil dumps. With this material, large areas of swamp land were filled in, breakwaters at both the Atlantic and Pacific entrances of the Canal were built and a considerable amount of shore on the Pacific side was reclaimed, providing sites that were later built upon. The excavation work, however, was not without difficulties; as excavation went deeper, millions of cubic yards of material from the banks were set in motion in the form of mud slides. But more on this subject soon.



Loading of a spoil train, Culebra Cut.

Work on the relocation of the Panama Railroad began in June 1907, no small task in itself and only overshadowed by the gigantic task of constructing the Canal. The building of the new railroad, which extended from Mindi to Corozal, was necessitated by the creation of the Gatun Lake which submerged the

PANAMA PADRE

greater part of the old railroad track.

To give some idea of the greatness of the work involved: the new railroad embankment which crosses the Gatun Valley has an average height of 82 feet and a length of one and a quarter miles; the construction of this embankment first required the building of trestle bridges over which the spoil trains could pass and from it dump their loads of earth and rock. Other similar immense embankments had to be made to carry the new railway line; this work involved the use of ten million cubic yards of material that was excavated from the bed of the Canal. At Monte Lirio a bascule bridge measuring 318 feet in length had to be constructed; the central span, 112 feet long, can be raised to allow ships to pass when necessary to the upper part of the lake. At Gamboa a steel girder bridge, a quarter of a mile in length, crosses the Chagres River; this bridge is composed of fourteen 80 foot girder spans and one 200 foot through truss channel span. Numerous other rivers and small streams are crossed by making reinforced concrete culverts. At Miraflores a tunnel 736 feet long was bored through the hill.

The total cost of the old Panama Railroad, which had been built through swamp and jungle from May 1850 to January 1855, and including improvements, was eight million dollars for the 47 miles, whereas the total cost of the 40 miles of the newly relocated railroad, seven miles of the old track being utilised, was US\$8,866,392. The first passenger train to run over part of the relocated line, on Sunday 1st May 1910 between Gatun and Gamboa, was composed of only four passenger cars and a light locomotive, the condition of the track not being considered sufficiently safe at the time to carry heavier stock. Other portions of the new line were made available for permanent service as soon as they were built; the entire length of the new line from Colon to Panama was brought into service on 2nd September 1913.

Gatun Lake covers some 164 square miles and is an artificial body of water located in the northern half of the Isthmus. To impound this vast amount of water a great dam was built at Gatun; the dam measures one and a half miles in length and is 400 feet in width at the surface level of the lake which is on average between 86 and 87 feet above sea level. There is also a spillway, 265 feet wide, which can be regulated to control the overflow, particularly necessary when the Chagres River is in flood. The dam effectively creates in the Chagres Valley a huge reservoir which furnishes water for the locks of the Canal. As the construction of the Canal proceeded and the waters of Gatun Lake began to rise and to gradually increase until 164 square miles of forest were inundated a most interesting situation was created which has had few parallels since the Bible story of the flood. What were hills became islands as the waters rose and wild animals of many species took refuge on them only to find themselves marooned with strange neighbours such as the jaguar with the deer, but not the wolf with the lamb. As to the snakes, from swimming in the water they found refuge in the high branches of some of the great forest trees, the trees being submerged to a considerable height; here the snakes were soon festooned together in considerable numbers. This great artificial lake of approximately 183 billion cubic feet of water is mainly supplied by the Chagres River, but also by some two hundred smaller rivers and streams which all flow into the lake. Gatun Lake also has two other significant benefits: firstly one of the problems of the Isthmus is solved, the harnessing of the Chagres River which had been capable of rising to a height of 35 feet above its normal level in a matter of twenty four hours and thereby inundating many square miles of country; this flooding is now lost in the lake. Secondly a large hydro-electric generating station was built at Gatun; overflow water from the lake is supplied to turbo-generator sets which furnish 6000 kW of power for the operation of the lock machinery, machine shops, dry dock and coal hauling plant and for the lighting of the locks and the Zone towns.

On 27th April 1910 the exit channel through which the Chagres River flowed was closed and the filling of the lake began. The filling had to be gradual on account of work still in progress, so that it was not till 3rd February 1914 that the lake was allowed to reach its design elevation of 85 feet above sea level. Four months earlier, 10th October 1913, when the lake stood at 61.7 feet above sea level, water was allowed through into the Culebra Cut by dynamiting a gap of 125 feet in the Gamboa Dyke. The charge was exploded by remote control by President Woodrow Wilson in Washington, DC. Both Ethel and I, together with a large number of spectators, were present to witness the blowing up of the Dyke as it was an historic

PANAMA PADRE

event in the construction of the Canal. On the Pacific side a much smaller lake, known as Miraflores Lake, was constructed; it lies between the Pedro Miguel and Miraflores locks and is one and a quarter miles in length.

Slides were the bugbear of the Canal digger. Some were gradual, others were without warning; some involved only a few thousand cubic yards of earth and rock, others involved millions. When they came unexpectedly they would often wreck or bury steam shovels, Ledgerwood cars, dump cars and railroad tracks, anything and everything that happened to be in their path. These slides were usually caused by the great pressure of superincumbent material which would slip on a smooth substratum of rock or softer material. Of these slides, those of Cucuracha and those of the west bank of the Culebra Cut were the most famous and gave the engineers the most trouble as they sometimes involved the blocking and interrupting of the movement of the spoil trains which were engaged in the removal of the excavated earth and rock from the bed of the Canal. Altogether, over three million cubic yards of material had to be removed from the Cucuracha slides and between seven and ten million from the slides at the west bank at Culebra. The total amount of additional material which had to be removed because of the mud slides amounted to between 21 and 22 million cubic yards. The French had been confronted with the same problem but, not having excavated to anything like the same depth, their slides were of a much smaller scale. Many of the slides began with the opening of small cracks on the surface of the earth into which the rain poured during heavy downfalls. The cracks would gradually open, extend and deepen till they became wide fissures in the ground, whereupon enormous masses involving thousands of tons of earth and rock would commence moving and continue ever to move towards the axis of the Canal.

On the west bank of the Canal at Culebra, where I lived, much of the town gradually disappeared because of this slide which eventually involved 75 acres. First to go were the remains of the old village (where my first church had stood) with its cobbled street and some 70 to 80 native shacks, also the old main line and station of the Panama Railroad (these being in use in the days of the French Canal Company when I first arrived on the Isthmus). Later the United States government built, for its white employees, roads and a considerable number of houses between my Mission House and the edge of the Canal cut which at that time was not less than an eighth of a mile away. But no one, not even the American engineers, apparently foresaw or anticipated the development of the great slides that were to undermine so much of the new town, for had the slides been foreseen the government would not have gone to the expense of erecting so many buildings there. As the excavation of the Canal went deeper, cracks began to appear in the banks; slowly but surely the cracks developed into great fissures; houses became unsafe and roads began to subside. A score or more of two- and four-family houses had to be pulled down; the large government hotel with its 250 rooms for employees had to be demolished. Then Culebra Post Office, the large YMCA Club House and the Fire Station had to go; meanwhile the streets that served all these buildings were engulfed in the slides and disappeared. To a stranger these daily happenings, in which millions of cubic yards of earth and rock were involved, would have created considerable interest, but to us, as residents, it was all part of the construction of the Canal and was accepted as such.

Next, the road leading to the summit of our hill disappeared and our neighbour's house, occupied by Colonel CA Devol, Chief Quartermaster, became unsafe and had to be demolished. Within 12 feet of the Mission House a new break developed, into the abyss of which one could look but it was not possible to see the bottom. The loosened bank of the Canal began to move towards the Canal, the bed of which was more than 300 feet below. Meanwhile steam shovels began work on the slide by removing the outer edge which as quickly was replaced by fresh movements and falls of rock and stone; many of these rocks had to be broken up or dislodged by dynamite. Apparently the geological formation of the hill was such that, whilst rocky and stable enough for a depth of 60 feet, the next strata was of a much softer formation; hence, as the excavation of the Canal bed became deeper and wider, the softer formation was forced down and out by the far heavier mass above with the result that, as soon as a movement began, the material above became loosened, began to move and a landslide occurred.

PANAMA PADRE

In May 1912 Ethel, Guy, Stanley and I went home to England on furlough for three months. It was during this leave that I had the honour of influencing my youngest sister, Joy, then aged 19, to become baptised. Just before leaving for England the slide situation had been such that the Mission House was seriously threatened; hence, in August I thought it wise to leave my wife and boys with my parents and for myself to return alone to the Isthmus so that I could have the opportunity to investigate conditions for myself. I found that the crack in front of the Mission House had enlarged considerably and that the whole hillside between the house and the Canal was sinking at the rate of from six inches to a foot per day; dozens of acres were in motion and at any moment thousands of tons of earth and rock might go hurtling down far below in the direction of the Canal bed which was one eighth of a mile away. The YMCA building, which had been erected only five years before at a cost of US\$30,000 (£6000), was already being torn down; as also were more four-family residences and a one-family house, while others were condemned to the same fate.



Culebra Cut, showing mud slide and Mission House, later demolished, on summit of hill.

Events in connection with the Mission House followed quickly. The slide in front of my veranda had dropped at least 40 feet just as though it had been cut with a knife, in going it took a narrow roadway

PANAMA PADRE

with it. It was on a Sunday, four weeks after my return, that the crisis arrived. All that day the rain poured down in torrents and I was away conducting services at two of my churches on the line; when I returned it was still raining and I at once saw that the slide had dropped another 40 feet during the day, making a depth of some 80 feet. Darkness came and, after conducting the evening service in the Culebra church, I returned to the Mission House to sleep. But there was not to be much sleep for me that night, for the noise of water and stones falling down the slide was continuous. At about 3.00 a.m., soon after I had fallen asleep, I was suddenly awakened by a roar of falling earth and stones; I knew that another large piece of the hillside had gone. I quickly jumped up and dressed, I lit my hurricane lantern and very cautiously made my way outside to see if any of the foundations of the supporting pillars of the house had disappeared; but the mist which had followed the heavy rain was so dense that, together with the darkness of the night, I could not see anything, so I returned to the house.

From 3.00 to 5.00 a.m. I spent the time removing all my furniture, even dragging the piano, from the front of the house to the back away from the slide. At 5.00 a.m., carrying my lantern, I took the path at the rear of the house and went down to the Canal Commission Quartermaster's office knowing that he would at that early hour be supervising the distribution of ice for the hotel and family quarters. When I found him he exclaimed, "I know what you have come for, Mr Loveridge, I could hardly sleep for thinking about you last night and wondering whether your house had survived. Are you ready for me to remove your things?" "Yes", I replied, "and as soon as you like". By 6.00 a.m. he had six large American army trucks, each drawn by two Kentucky mules, ready outside the Mission House and a gang of negroes to undertake the removing of my small amount of furniture. At 8.00 a.m. white American electricians and plumbers started to remove all the electric wiring and fittings and the plumbing from the house and bathroom and by sunset the house itself had been demolished and all the timber and roofing taken away. Such was the efficiency and speed of the Americans. During the day I sent a cable to Ethel in Britain suggesting to her that she postpone her return to the Isthmus.

The same day the Quartermaster assigned to me temporary quarters in a four-family house, to which he arranged the removal of my household goods. To replace the demolished Mission House, Colonel George W Goethals, Chief Engineer of the Canal, authorised the erection of a new house to be built to plans approved by myself and on a site that I was allowed to choose. Within a month of my precipitous vacation of the old Mission House, the Canal Zone authorities began the construction of the new. The location at Culebra was ideal and picturesque with a hill in front and an unspoilt valley and distant hills to the rear, the houses of our nearest neighbours were at least 150 yards away. Accordingly I cabled to Ethel to come and join me; accompanied by our two boys and a friend, she arrived on 12th November 1912 and, though the house was not quite finished, we moved into our new home with much cause for thankfulness. It was not long after this that one of the Canal Zone engineers told me that when he came to examine the geological formation of the site where my old Mission House had stood he discovered that all the foundations were undisturbed; I had built better than I knew for the house "was founded upon a rock".

Chapter 27

“THE DREAM OF CENTURIES BECOMES A REALITY”

On 3rd August 1914 the first ship to make the passage across the Isthmus without being dismantled, as happened to the early Spanish ships, passed along the Panama Canal and it was my privilege, accompanied by Ethel and our son Guy who was then seven, to be on that first ship. At long last the dream of centuries was an accomplished fact, and twelve days after the passage of that first ship the Canal was proclaimed open to the shipping of the world.

Christopher Columbus sought the "Secret of the Strait" but did not find it. To Magellan belongs the honour of that discovery when in 1520 he found the Strait, which now bears his name, between Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego; this Strait was the first link for Europeans between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. However, Vasco Nunez de Balboa was the first white man to see the Pacific Ocean; after 24 days of weary marching across the Isthmus in his search for the Southern Sea, he was told by his Indian guides that the next morning from the summit of the next mountain he would see the Southern Sea. To Balboa it was the most momentous day of his life and, lest he should have been deceived about it or lest it should only be some great inland lake, he resolved to climb to the summit alone. So on 25th September 1513, with throbbing heart and eager eyes, he climbed to the top of the mountain and at ten o'clock in the morning, gazing to the south, there before him lay the Southern Sea; the Indians had not lied. Before summoning his men, he fell on his knees and gave God thanks for permitting him to be the first European to behold the new sea. The conquistadores had one redeeming feature; however cruel and rapacious, they were as ever ready to pray as they were to fight. But what would Vasco Nunez de Balboa have given, had he been able to visualise it, to have been able to make the crossing of the Isthmus, not in 25 days on foot, but in five and a half hours in a modern ocean liner?

For four centuries the idea of a canal across the Isthmus was being mooted. To Francisco Lopez de Gomaro, Chaplain to Hernando Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico, belongs the credit of being the first to prepare plans for the construction of a canal across the Isthmus when in 1529 he laid the plans before the King of Spain; but an early death ended his promising career. Not all Catholic priests were as enlightened as was Father Gomaro, for the Jesuit father, Joseph de Acosta, who crossed the Isthmus in 1570 on his way to Peru declared that he held in vain all pretensions to open the land and,

"that no human power will suffice to demolish the most strong and impenetrable mountains and solid rocks which God had placed between the two seas and which sustain the fury of both oceans. And when it will be to men possible, it would in my opinion, be very proper to fear the chastisement of Heaven for wishing to correct the works which the Creator, with greatest deliberation and foresight, ordained in the fabrication of this Universe".

Others followed with different schemes and suggestions, the most notable probably being that of Baron Alexander von Humboldt, the famous explorer and geologist, that he develops in 1811 in his "Political Essay on New Spain" and in which he discusses the merits of no less than nine different possible routes, but gives the place of honour to Panama as the most feasible and desirable.

The "London Illustrated News" of 31st January 1852 contained an article in which were outlined the

PANAMA PADRE

various schemes proposed for the union of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. However, the credit goes to Lieutenant LNB Wyse of France for not only making a survey of the present canal route but of also going to Bogota and persuading the Colombian Government to give to him a concession to construct a canal across the Isthmus of Panama. This was in 1878 and on his return to Paris, Lieutenant Wyse laid his plans before Count Ferdinand de Lesseps, the builder of the Suez Canal who, in due course, submitted the plans to the International Congress, then meeting in the French capital, and secured its approval.

Thus it was that the dream of centuries began, thanks to the French and later the Americans, to become a reality. In fact the Isthmian Canal Commission, having taken over construction on 4th May 1904, completed the task in ten years and four months.

It is surprising, but true, that the Panama Canal does not cross from east to west as one might suppose but from south-east to north-west, giving the curious result that the city of Panama, on the Pacific seaboard, lies 22½ miles east of the city of Colon, on the Atlantic seaboard. Although the length of the Canal from shore line to shore line is 40 miles, its length including dredged channels from deep water in the Atlantic to deep water in the Pacific is in fact 50 miles.

Before the passage of that first ship it was necessary to test the operating machinery of the Gatun Locks. This took place on 26th September 1913 when the tug "Gatun" with flags flying and whistle blowing was successfully locked through, with a great crowd of spectators cheering, into the Gatun Lake; she made her return trip the following day. A fortnight later a further test was made by passing a fleet of thirteen vessels, including three groups of dredging vessels each towed by a tug and also a pile-driver, through the same lock chambers at the same time. This was followed a few days later by a similar test of the Pacific Locks at Miraflores; all these tests proved eminently successful. Finally on 10th October 1913 the last dyke that held back the water from entering the Culebra Cut was dynamited and the water allowed to enter freely.

Half an hour later, after the first rush of water had gone through, a cayuca (native dug-out canoe), followed by three launches, passed through the gap. Thus the last barrier between the two oceans, for the Miraflores dyke had already been blown up, disappeared and the waterway stretching from sea to sea became an accomplished fact.

Monday 3rd August 1914 was a great day, a day which will long be remembered as the date on which the first ship, the SS "Cristobal", a Panama Railroad passenger steamer of nearly 10,000 tons, passed through the Panama Canal. Those of us who were favoured with invitations to make the passage in her had to catch a special train leaving for Colon at 5.00 a.m., as the "Cristobal" was to sail from pier no. 9 at Cristobal Docks at 7.00 a.m. As I had only reached home from the city of Panama at 11.30 the previous night after a very long and heavy day taking Sunday services, to have to rise at 4.00 a.m. for an early breakfast was not easy for I was over-tired from the previous day; nonetheless I, together with Ethel and Guy, were not going to miss that train. We reached Colon on schedule at 6.40 a.m.

Colonel George W Goethals, Chief Engineer and later the first Governor of the Canal, was at the Cristobal pier to watch our departure which promptly took place at 7 o'clock. A tug towed our vessel out between the breakwaters that form the eastern mouth of the Canal; whereupon the lines were thrown off and the "Cristobal", which from stem to stern was decked with flags, proceeded under her own steam on her epoch-making trip. There were some 250 guests on board, including M Bunau-Varilla who had been at one time in charge of Canal construction under de Lesseps and who had had so much to do in negotiating the sale of the French interests of the Canal to the United States. As our ship passed through the junction of the old French Canal cutting at Mindi, with its old and rusty machinery still lying on the banks of the cutting, a monument to the hopes and disappointments of the French, and passed into the new channel constructed by the United States Canal Commission, M Bunau-Varilla spoke. He explained to a large and interested group gathered around him something of the difficulties with which the French engineers had to contend in their encounter with virgin soil and forest; with their use of what soon became antiquated machinery and above all their heavy loss of life through malaria and yellow fever.

The six miles to the Gatun locks were made in all the glory of the early morning tropical sunshine

PANAMA PADRE

and were made by 8.15; as this was a trial trip we took longer to reach the locks and to pass through them than was the case later on with commercial shipping. Ships do not pass through the Canal locks under their own steam, but are towed by what are known as electric mules; two mules usually pulling the ship, one on each side of the lock, and two mules, again one on each side, restraining the ship in order to avoid any risk of the vessel colliding with the lock gates. By means of the three separate lockages at Gatun our ship was raised to an elevation of 65 feet above sea level, the height of the Gatun Lake. All Canal work had been stopped for the day in honour of the occasion; hence, thousands of people had assembled on the locks and, wherever it was possible, along the route to obtain a good view of our ship going past. Everywhere the crowds cheered and whenever we passed any dredgers, lighters, tugs or other Canal craft we were greeted with horns, steam whistles and hooters. From beginning to end the journey was like a triumphant passage.

Upon entering Gatun Lake, this great artificial inland sea of 164 square miles soon broadens. Here there are islands, covered in tropical verdure and waving palms, which once had been hilltops; the greater part of the hills now being submerged. One thing that would then have impressed a stranger, who was unfamiliar with the development of the Lake, was the numerous dead trees, many of them once forest giants, the lofty branches of which bore silent testimony to the submerged virgin forests now buried beneath the waters of the Lake. All the trees within the buoyed channel had been removed, the other trees would decay with time. To me the passage over the Lake was filled with memories of the past as I recalled the frequent rail and horseback journeys that I had so often made over the very ground, now far below at the bottom of the Lake, over which our ship was then passing. I thought of some of the little villages and towns with their huts and houses, their little churches where I had preached and the cemeteries where I had laid many to rest. Forgotten or unknown to many, but sacred to some of us.

From Gatun to Gamboa, following the direct channel, the distance is 23½ miles and the Lake becomes narrower as one approaches Gamboa; here our ship entered the Culebra Cut which is nine miles in length. When one thinks of the vast amount of material, both rock and earth, which had had to be removed, it almost makes one gasp in astonishment; without the latest modern machinery this could never have been possible. As we approached Gold Hill we passed, on the west bank, what had been the Great Slide from which between 21 and 22 million cubic yards of earth and rock were taken. Both here and on the south side of Gold Hill, on account of the Cucuracha slide on the east bank from which ten million cubic yards of material had to be removed, we had to proceed very cautiously.

As our ship continued through the Culebra Cut each boat and tug that we passed fell into line behind us until we soon had quite a flotilla of Canal vessels accompanying us far as the Pedro Miguel Locks. We also experienced one of our severe tropical deluges; however, the rain did not seem to dampen the enthusiasm of the passengers on board. By the time that we reached the Locks, the rain ceased almost as suddenly as it had begun. At the Pedro Miguel Locks the majority of spectators were soldiers of the United States Tenth Infantry. Here we were lowered into Miraflores Lake, one mile in length, through which we passed to enter the Miraflores Locks; this time we were twice lowered, passing out at sea level into the Pacific Channel. We reached Balboa at 6.30 p.m., having completed the journey through the Canal in 11½ hours. On our arrival off Balboa, our ship was once again subjected to a great ovation from the whistles, hooters and horns of the tugs and other vessels at the docks, all seeming to vie with one another as to which could make the greatest noise.

At the wharf at Balboa, newspaper boys were busy selling a special edition of the evening paper which, although Britain was not to declare war on Germany until the next day, 4th August 1914, gave an account of a great naval battle that had allegedly just been fought in the North Sea between British and German warships. The newspaper gave the names of the ships that had been engaged and sunk and gave particulars, even to minute details, of those which had been damaged and disabled; the whole of the front page was occupied with the story. As the ultimatum given by Britain to Germany was not due to expire till midnight 3rd August, this may give some idea of the wild rumours that were already emanating from Germany and elsewhere and that were being relayed from the United States and other countries; rumours

PANAMA PADRE

that had no foundation in fact. Alas, only too soon, 24 hours after our historic trip the truth of the Great War was to break upon a troubled and distressed world.

Twelve days after our passage, on Saturday 15th August 1914, the SS "Ancon", sister ship to the "Cristobal", officially inaugurated the Panama Canal to commercial traffic by taking a distinguished company through the Canal. On board were the President of the Republic of Panama with his Cabinet and other Government officials, members of the diplomatic corps and Consuls-general, Officers of the US Tenth Infantry and Coast Artillery, Officials of the Panama Canal and others.



Whereas the "Cristobal" had made the trip through the Canal only from entrance channel to entrance channel, the "Ancon" made her passage with her guests to the end of the dredged channel five miles out into the Bay of Panama before returning to tie up at her berth in Balboa; even so, she accomplished the whole trip in two hours less than did the "Cristobal". After her arrival, the following message was received by Colonel George W Goethals, Chief Engineer, from the Secretary of War in Washington:

"Washington, DC.

August 15, 1914

Col. George W. Goethals,
Culebra, Canal Zone.

On behalf of the Government and people of the United States I express to you and through you to all concerned in the achievement, the intense gratification and pride experienced today. By the successful passage of vessels through the Canal the dream of centuries has

PANAMA PADRE

become a reality. Its stupendous undertaking has been finally accomplished and a perpetual memorial to the genius and enterprise of our people has been created. The fully earned and deserved congratulations of a grateful people go out to you and your colabourers."

The following day several commercial vessels that had been waiting at the terminals to pass through the Canal, made the transit from the Atlantic to the Pacific, while others made their journey from the Pacific to the Atlantic. Thus the Canal became open to the commerce of the world. During the next six months, 496 vessels used the Canal and paid \$2,138,442 in tolls. In the first twelve months just over six million tons of cargo passed through the Canal whilst gross earnings were \$5,500,000.

Two months to the day after the official opening of the Canal, a large slide on the east bank involving nearly 750,000 cubic yards of rock and earth blocked the channel and caused the temporary suspension of traffic. This was no great surprise. The slide was so efficiently handled by the Dredging Department that ships were able to pass through again five days later. This was followed eleven days after by another slide which was cleared in four days. Other slides followed from time to time causing the interruption of traffic, particularly in 1915-16, and involving the removal of some 23,259,909 cubic yards of material by dredges from the Culebra Cut; but eventually these were brought under control. To quote the Annual Report of the Governor of the Panama Canal for 1917, "It is believed that in future the great slides of the Canal will be of historic interest only". This statement may be said to have become literally true.

On the last day of 1914 we had in transit through the Canal the old English convict ship "Success" en route for the San Francisco Exposition where she was to be exhibited. Built in 1790, she was the last of the old prison ships used by England for the purpose of transporting convicts to the penal settlements in Australia. She had carried her own guns as indicated by the portholes, breaching rings, bolts and other fittings that still remained intact. She was built of Indian teak, measured 135 feet in length and 29 feet in beam and was registered as 380 tons. In one of her earlier voyages she had been attacked by the heavily armed French picaroon "La Rosa" which she successfully resisted. The shot marks received during the engagement could still be seen in the hull close to the water line. After many other interesting experiences and adventures the "Success" was finally no longer a prison ship and, after being used for the purpose of exhibition in Australia, she was brought back to England for overhauling and repairs before going to San Francisco. Nearly two years later she again made the transit of the Canal, in tow, this time en route for New Orleans.

My brother Alec, then aged 28 years, also traversed the Canal. This was in 1917 when he was en route from England to Australia, in the warmer climes of which he planned to stay in order to mitigate the symptoms of tuberculosis from which he was suffering. Not only did he visit us in Panama, a visit that we much enjoyed, but also he visited Ethel's parents in Jamaica.

From the opening of the Canal the Canal authorities provided a full range of services for ships that utilise the Canal. Should a ship that is about to make the passage of the Canal require some repairs to be executed, a force of mechanics will board her as she approaches, undertake the repairs while she is making the transit of the Canal and complete the repairs, where possible, before she reaches the other ocean. In the case of a large passenger ship, laundry, often amounting to a ton or more, can be collected from the ship as she approaches the Canal, conveyed ashore in a launch, washed and ironed, sent across the Isthmus by train and delivered to the ship the same day as she completes her transit of the Canal. Ships can also take on all the bunker coal they need, this is delivered in a few hours by the most up to date electrically operated coal hoists.

Five years after the opening of the Canal we witnessed the imposing sight of the US Pacific Fleet traversing the Canal. The large number of vessels involved meant that this took place from 24th to 27th July 1919.

The cost of the Panama Canal was US\$375 million (£75 million), of which \$40 million (£8 million) was paid to the New French Canal Company for the purchase of its rights and property and \$10 million (£2

PANAMA PADRE

million) was paid to the Republic of Panama for the concession. The United States possesses in perpetuity the rights, power and authority within what is known as the Canal Zone, a strip of land and water extending five miles on both sides of the axis of the Canal and comprising in total about 470 square miles, but not the sovereign rights which continue nominally to belong to the Republic of Panama.

Having recorded the completion and opening of the Canal, a few words about its Chief Engineers may not be out of place here. One of the compensations for living on the Isthmus, not that there was ever any need for such, was the opportunities for meeting many distinguished Canal Officials, including the three successive Chief Engineers. Mr John F Wallace, the first Chief Engineer to arrive on the Isthmus, came in June 1904 but his tenure of office was short as he resigned just twelve months later. He used to visit Culebra and travelled in the luxurious Pullman coach "La France" which had at one time been the saloon coach of Count Ferdinand de Lesseps and which was specially equipped with restaurant facilities for serving meals. Mr Wallace, the immaculate gentleman that he was, was always dressed in white, even to his shoes; he would arrive accompanied by a staff of several clerks and other officials, all similarly dressed, and usually by two or three ladies. How he and those who accompanied him, in their dainty white shoes, were able to inspect much of the Canal work, when one recalls the mud of the Canal banks, always puzzled me. Mrs MD Gorgas, in the biography of her husband, states:

"In March Mr John F Wallace, the Chief Engineer, intimated to Mr Taft, then Secretary of War, his intention of resigning. Just why Mr Wallace wished to leave has never been explained, that he lived in dread of yellow fever is no secret. That he even believed that he had had a touch of the disease was also well known. He was one of the officials who had taken the precaution of bringing his coffin with him. Under the circumstances it is perhaps not strange that Washington officialdom should have put an unpleasant interpretation upon his immediate resignation, and an immense amount of newspaper notoriety ensue."

Mr Wallace was succeeded by Mr John F Stevens, a practical and experienced railroad man, who took up his duties just a month later and who made Culebra, not Panama, his headquarters. He was the very opposite to Mr Wallace. One never knew where one might meet him; a freight train would slow down and Mr Stevens in his shirt sleeves and with his jacket over his arm would jump out of the cab of the locomotive or from the caboose at the rear. Sometimes one might see him travelling on a loaded spoil train, one might meet him on foot on some part of the railroad line or down in the Canal cut; while Mr Stevens was on the Isthmus the "La France" was hardly used. John Stevens was liked and respected, I think that the employees recognised that from him they would always get a square deal; but he too abruptly resigned.

Immediately following the resignation of Mr Stevens, Major (later Colonel) George W Goethals, familiarly known among the employees as "The Colonel", was appointed. President Roosevelt wanted someone, he said, who could not easily resign and so he decided to place an army engineer in charge, thereby securing continuity of service. Colonel Goethals represented the happy medium between John F Wallace and John F Stevens; he did not often travel in the "La France" and he did not often jump off freight trains. He usually made use of the ordinary passenger train unless he decided to travel in his personal rail motor car, commonly known as "The Yellow Peril" as it was painted that colour.

Colonel Goethals was liked and trusted by the men who found him to be fair and impartial; his was a paternal dictatorship. He expected every man to do his duty and he expected to be obeyed; with him every man knew that he would obtain a square deal. One thing that added to his popularity was his Sunday morning interviews; every Sunday morning he sat at his desk in his private office with his Secretary nearby. Here any employee, whether white or black, who had a grievance or complaint to make, had the right to air it. There and then the complaint was investigated and, if justified, was remedied. Many and varied were the stories that Colonel Goethals had to listen to patiently. I recall how one Sunday morning after I had left home to conduct a service, my telephone rang and Ethel answered it. The Colonel was sending to me a coloured woman who had been turned out of doors by the man with whom she was living; I was asked if I could bring about a reconciliation and if possible to marry the couple. This I was able to accomplish the next

PANAMA PADRE

day. But it was his readiness to try to understand the domestic affairs and the problems of the people, to investigate accusations of unfair treatment by foremen and others who might have authority, to smooth the little things which only too easily create discontent and it was his justice in dealing with these that gained for him both the respect and trust of his employees. Colonel Goethals stayed at his post till two years after the Canal was finished, two years during which ships daily passed in both directions through the Canal, and till he was able see some of the troublesome slides disposed of. He retired from the Isthmus in September 1916. In recognition of his great service in completing the Canal, he was appointed to the US Senate as the first Governor of the Canal and was also honoured by being promoted to the rank of Major-General.



Left: John F Stevens, Chief Engineer of the Panama Canal and General Manager of the Panama Railroad and Steamship Line.
Centre: Judge Charles E Magoon, Governor of the Canal Zone, Minister of the United States to the Republic of Panama and only resident member of the Isthmian Canal Commission.
Right: Colonel WC Gorgas, USA Chief Sanitary Officer of the Isthmian Canal Zone.

Chapter 28

CHANGING TIMES

It was disconcerting to see six of my churches, representing much toil and labour, close within four years, three of them in less than six months; to read the burial service, figuratively speaking, over the very churches to which I was instrumental in giving birth and of which I took such care. Yet this is just what was happening; as the construction of the Canal progressed and as the water of the Gatun Lake rose, towns and villages had to be depopulated, all buildings demolished and railroad tracks taken up. Everything, including the churches, had to give way to the Canal; due notice was always given by the Canal Commission and, where the building was our own, compensation, even if small, was paid. But when the Canal work in a district was finished and people were prevented from further cultivation of the soil, all means of livelihood abruptly came to an end; hence, inhabitants were obliged to move out.

From 1911 to 1915 we closed churches in Cunette, Matachin, Haut Obispo, Cucuracha, New Frijoles and Culebra. But none of these closures represented labour lost or money wasted; for just as the Canal Commission erected and maintained numerous buildings in which to house its employees, both white and black, it was equally the duty of the Christian church to take care of the spiritual needs of the Canal workers, an investment that repaid one hundred fold. There were 45,000 white and coloured employees, from at least fifty different countries, who were served by a dozen Protestant ministers, of whom more than half were Chaplains in the service of the Canal Commission.

The depopulation of the area submerged by the formation of the Gatun Lake was followed by the depopulation of the surrounding districts. As for the Culebra Cut, excavation at length came to an end, all steam shovels, their attendant spoil trains and associated equipment became redundant, the Gamboa Dyke was dynamited and the Cut was filled with water. Hence, in the eleven months ending on 30th June 1914 emigration from the Isthmus exceeded immigration by no less than 15,166 persons, of whom the greater part consisted of Canal Zone labourers who were returning to their homes in the West Indies. In one fortnight alone I issued 26 letters of transfer to members going home. Yet in spite of this, the spiritual work continued during these years of transition; for in the five years from 1911 to 1915 I baptised 310, received 451 into the church and conducted 248 marriages. On two different occasions I had the joy of baptising 34 candidates on the same Sunday, but a zenith for me was in August 1913 when, at one service in a stream which had been specially damned for the occasion, I baptised 52 candidates and the following Sunday gave the right hand of fellowship to 84 new members including the newly baptised. Another zenith was when, in one week alone, 89 persons were present at my inquirer's class, 99 persons at my Bible Class and 125 persons at the prayer meeting. Though not all attendances were as good as these, many ministers' hearts would be gladdened to have the same encouragement in England.

In 1914, having purchased a site in the new Chorrillo suburb of Panama, a district with at that time a population of 3000 negroes, several saloons but no church, I was able to erect a new Church with the financial help of the Home Mission Board. This building, which was almost on the shore of the Pacific, had a cottage adjoining in which my District Visitor, the faithful Henry Clarke, and his wife were to live; they were also responsible for the care and cleaning of the church. The foundation stone of the church was laid on Good Friday 10th April 1914 by the Hon William Jennings Price who was the United States Minister to Panama and a Baptist. (His full title was Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United

PANAMA PADRE

States of America to the Republic of Panama and this title appears on his visit card that I still have). The site purchased had been the only one available that was large enough for our purpose but, as the waves of the Pacific Ocean reached almost to the foundation pillars of the church, I purchased two hundred cartloads of stone with which to build a protecting wall between the church and the ocean. I made daily journeys by train between Culebra and Panama in order to personally supervise the construction of the church and the wall. Before the erection of the church it used to be said that it was hardly safe for a white woman to go down the streets of Chorrillo after dark. But after completion of the church building a new spirit seemed to be born, the influence of the saloons was lessened and Ethel and others were able to come and go with impunity.



*Chorrillo Baptist Sunday School outing,
Moss Loveridge in foreground on left.*

Three months later, on Sunday 19th July 1914, the church was formally opened for worship by the Hon William Jennings Price. Within five months of the opening the church membership reached 140, one pleasing feature was the large number of members from some of my closed churches who had removed to Chorrillo. I arranged for both the trowel and key that had been used in the stone laying and opening

PANAMA PADRE

ceremonies to be engraved with the name of the Hon William Jennings Price and to be electroplated and a few weeks later I left both at the American Legation as a little acknowledgement and appreciation of Mr Price's services. Mr Price was then absent in the States, but on his return I received a charming and effusive letter of thanks from him. On more than one occasion Ethel and I were guests at dinners given by Mr Price at the Legation.

At the time of the arrival of the 29th US Infantry at Culebra in March 1913, my family was one of only five civilian families left in the town. Culebra was now off the main line and only served by a shuttle train which crossed the Canal by a pontoon bridge; hence trains were often delayed, sometimes for an hour, to allow ships to pass through the locks. This meant that it became increasingly difficult for me to commute to and from my new work in the city of Panama and it was often nearly midnight before I reached my home.

Accordingly I decided to build a little room, a study cum bedroom, on the shore side of the Chorrillo church in which I could sleep two or three nights a week. By calling for free labour and lending a hand myself the total cost was only US\$125 (£25). From the open windows of my new room I was able to watch the pelicans with their enormous bills fishing for their evening meal; I also enjoyed going to sleep at night to the music of the lapping of the waves of the Pacific Ocean as they washed against the pillars on which my room stood. The work at Chorrillo was very encouraging and the cause rapidly grew; at both our Christmas 1914 and Easter 1915 baptismal services, which were held at 5.00 a.m., we had over 300 people crowded into the church and many more outside who were unable to enter.

On the 4th July 1915, our Culebra church was requisitioned by the Canal Commission for use as a hospital for the 29th Infantry and this coincided with the starting of a new cause at Cirio in a building lent to us by the Canal Commission. Only a few coloured employees, all of whom were either employed in the construction of the Canal or in the Army camp, had been allowed to remain on the West Bank and the Cirio church was started to meet their needs. Upon the closure of the Culebra church I arranged for all the seats, communion table, chairs and organ to be transferred to Cirio. At Corozal Road in the Caledonia District of Panama, some two miles from Chorrillo, I heard of an empty building that had been erected for use as shops.

After a little bargaining I was able to rent this building for £54 per year, the owner consenting to the removal of the partitions that had divided it into four rooms, and we opened for public worship on 13th February 1916. From the very outset it was too small to hold the congregations which gathered, but it was the largest place that was available at the time and it served as a beginning. Two months after opening at Corozal Road I received 36 people into church membership there, thus some of the seed sown earlier was already beginning to bear fruit.

Ethel and I could never sufficiently acknowledge our indebtedness to many of the Canal officials and their wives for the kindness they showed to us in so many different ways during the time of the construction of the Canal. Not very long after our marriage, Ethel and I were busy one evening trying to exterminate a family of mice that had its nest inside our piano. I had pulled the piano completely to pieces in an effort to find the mice; the dining table was covered with portions of the keyboard, while other portions of the piano occupied every chair and were littered all over the room. At this worst possible moment there came a knock at the front door; on opening the door, there stood Major (later Colonel) DD Gaillard, a member of the Canal Commission, who had come to pay us a formal call. The state of confusion in the room could hardly have been worse; however, I had no choice but to ask our visitor in, explaining the situation and offering my apologies. But whatever may have been our embarrassment, he soon sought to put us at our ease and, before he left, there was some story telling and not a few good laughs over some experiences of early days. Colonel Gaillard never lived to see the first ship go through the Canal; he succumbed to a growth on the brain which was attributed to the arduous years spent in the construction of the Canal. With a desire to honour his name and perpetuate his memory, the Culebra Cut was renamed the Gaillard Cut as he was responsible for its excavation as Engineer in charge of the Central Division. But it is very doubtful if the new name will ever succeed in replacing the old, associated as it was with many memories of the past.

PANAMA PADRE

Major (later, in the Great War, Major-General) William L Sibert, another member of the Canal Commission, was another good friend and our next door neighbour in Culebra. After the birth of Guy, many a Sunday night Mrs Sibert would volunteer to take care of him so that Ethel could be free to accompany me to church.

We also had the pleasure of meeting many distinguished visitors who came to see the Canal. One of these was President-elect Howard Taft, in honour of whom Ethel and I were invited to attend a reception. As we approached the President-elect to be introduced and to shake hands with him, we were preceded by a big burly American engineer; when his name was called and he was in the act of stepping forward to be received, two secret service men standing near Mr Taft suddenly sprang forward and, seizing the engineer's arms, thrust them above his head while they swiftly passed their hands over his clothes in search of any weapon. Finding none, he was allowed to shake hands and to move on as if nothing had happened. It was a little disconcerting for us; it may have been that the engineer had previously said something indiscreet. However, Ethel and I proceeded without a body search, were introduced and shook hands with Mr Taft.

On two occasions at Culebra I met the Hon William Jennings Bryan, a most interesting person who had thrice stood for the presidency of the United States. He was highly esteemed by many for his convictions and integrity and was a most gifted speaker, being known in his homeland as the Silver Tongued Orator. Perhaps he will best be remembered in connection with his brave and heroic fight in what was known as the Stokes Trial in which he opposed as illegal the teaching of evolution in the schools of Tennessee. Although he won his case, he succumbed, in the very hour of victory, to a heart attack.

President Theodore Roosevelt was another visitor to the Isthmus but, unfortunately, owing to urgent church matters, I left for Jamaica only a few hours before his arrival and so missed the opportunity of meeting him. His arrival coincided with one of the worst floods experienced on the Isthmus for some years, the railroad track was submerged and train services interrupted. His experience must have been not unlike that of a party of Congressmen who, on a later occasion, came to the Isthmus for the purpose of enquiring into the necessary appropriations for the ensuing year. Like President Roosevelt they arrived in the month of November which is usually the wettest month of the year. It was said that before leaving New York, the Chairman of the party informed a newspaper correspondent that he hoped by means of the visit to save the United States government from 2 to 2½ million dollars by cutting salaries. But it rained so heavily and so incessantly whilst the members of the Commission were on the Isthmus that it must have considerably dampened their ardour by making them feel that the men, who had to endure such tropical deluges, deserved what they earned.

Of explorers and travellers whom I met, one was Sir Ernest Shackleton who had arrived at Colon on his famous "Nimrod" on his return from his Polar expedition of 1909. He stayed for a couple of nights with Major WL Sibert next door to us at Culebra; we also heard him give a lecture on his Polar trip. In October 1913 Ethel and I made a visit to the Polar ship "Fram" which had just arrived at Colon. The next day Ethel happened to be visiting a friend and, to her surprise, found that the Captain of the "Fram", a Norwegian, was also visiting the same friend; Ethel was introduced to him. His name was Captain Thorvald Nilsen and he was about to take the "Fram" around Cape Horn to San Francisco, where another famous explorer, Captain Amundsen, would embark. This was only a few months before the Canal was due to open, hence a few months later Captain Nilsen would have been able to shorten his voyage by several thousand miles.

Amongst callers at the Mission House was Miss Annie S Peck, a mountain climber of international fame, who visited us on her return journey after ascending several peaks in the Peruvian Andes. She was a member of Dr Aked's Fifth Avenue Baptist church, New York City, where I, having been in New York not long before her visit to Culebra, had worshipped. It so happened that, at that particular service that I attended, thanksgiving was made for Miss Peck's latest successful climb and for her safe descent. Reference was also made to this ascent on the back of the printed service sheet that I brought away with me as a souvenir little dreaming that I should so soon have the pleasure of meeting the lady concerned. When I told Miss Peck about it, and produced the service sheet, which I gave to her, she was intensely interested and glad

PANAMA PADRE

to receive the copy.

Another noteworthy visitor was Dr Harry Guinness MD FRGS, well known as the founder of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union and Director of Harley College, London, a college that has been instrumental in sending over one thousand men and women, including myself, to the foreign mission field. Dr Guinness was en route for Peru and he spent a night with us in the Mission House. During his short visit he took some moving pictures of the excavation work that was taking place at the Canal site; he also addressed some hundreds of Americans in the Canal Commission's Culebra Hotel during the lunch hour and in the evening he addressed a large audience of coloured people in the open-air.

Barely two months before the outbreak of the Great War the German cruiser "Nurnberg" arrived in Panama Bay whereupon her Officers were granted the usual facilities for seeing the Canal. On their arrival at Culebra a number of her sailors visited our Post Office in order to buy stamps for use and as souvenirs; having business myself at the Post Office I there met some of them who requested me to explain to them their change in US currency which they did not understand. Not very long afterwards many of these very men were to find a watery grave when a British cruiser sank the "Nurnberg" in a naval battle off the Falkland Islands. The day after war was declared the Chinese shopkeepers in Panama City and along the line raised their prices for tinned condensed milk; whoever might suffer because of the war, they did not propose that it would be they.

The war quickly reacted upon the Canal in that German merchant ships that normally would have made use of the Canal were driven off the seas. One day, on account of an enemy warship believed to be not many miles out to sea, all the vessels of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company were ordered to be held at Panama City. Apparently a small British tramp steamer had passed a warship which had dipped the British flag at her; this immediately raised suspicion as it was known that no British warship was in these waters. Hence the inevitable conclusion that the vessel was a German cruiser that was making use of the deception in the hope of securing bigger game.

As one country after another became involved in the Great War, President Woodrow Wilson issued various proclamations of neutrality as applying to the United States and the Canal Zone; at the same time the strictest regulations were made governing the transit of any vessels that might be classified as vessels of war or that were carrying supplies of any description that might be considered as serviceable for the purpose of war. Already ships that were passing through the Canal were garbed in the slate grey paint that was soon to become so familiar both on merchant ships as well as on naval vessels during the continuation of the conflict. On 8th September 1914 a Proclamation was issued by President Wilson calling upon all persons in the United States to observe Sunday 4th October as a day of prayer for the return of peace in Europe. This was promulgated throughout the Canal Zone and was observed in all our churches.

Being, from March 1913, one of only five civilian families remaining in Culebra in what was now a large military camp Ethel and I found that no people could have been kinder or more considerate to us than the 29th US Infantry. Almost as soon as the regiment arrived the Chaplain called on me on behalf of the Officers to invite me to become an honorary member of the Officers' Club and, thereafter, no big function took place at Regimental Headquarters without us being invited, though for various reasons we did not avail ourselves of these courtesies; nonetheless we appreciated all the kindness shown. Three days a week the Regimental Band gave open-air concerts and, though I was seldom at home to enjoy them, Ethel and our two small boys found endless delight in listening to the music. With the occupation of Culebra by the military my work there completely ceased; hence, till our removal later to Balboa, Ethel and the boys attended the services and Sunday school that were conducted by the Regimental Chaplain. A source of extreme amusement to us was a consignment of Mexican mules that arrived soon after the regiment, the greater part of the mules not yet broken in. They used to be taken out in the morning for exercise across considerable tracts of open ground. In front rode a soldier with a condensed milk tin on a stick that he would shake as a signal for the rest to follow, often through long grazing grass which must have been a tremendous temptation; the mules would be in single file or two or three abreast as they pleased, the rear being brought

PANAMA PADRE

up by four or five soldiers, mounted on mules, whose business it was to round up any laggards which, to gratify their appetites, had remained behind.

It was on a hot sultry day in April 1917 near the Plaza Santa Ana in Panama that I was passing a large drug store that was owned by Germans. From the outset of the war this shop had exhibited life-size portraits of the Kaiser in one window and his wife, the Kaiserine, in the other; as at that time neither the Republic of Panama nor the United States were at war with Germany, the owners of the drug store were free to do this. Adjoining the store was another portion of the building where one could partake of soft drinks purchased in the drug store; the front of this annex was open to the street but, as there were no windows, the rear of the annex was in semi-darkness. As it was very hot, I stopped and, having purchased a glass of lemonade, sat down to enjoy it; however, I became conscious that there was someone else sitting in the dark at the back. On closer observation I recognised one of the American Police Officers from the Culebra convict prison; as he was dressed in mufti and nearly 20 miles from his normal duties, to most he was unknown. So I left my seat in order to speak to him but, as I approached, he placed a finger in front of his lips and said, "Speak quietly". Surprised and amused I asked, "But what are you doing here?" He answered, "I don't mind telling you; I am shadowing these Germans". The next day, with many other Germans on the Isthmus, they were picked up and removed to the lovely island of Taboga, 11 miles out in Panama Bay, where they were all interned for the duration of the war because the United States had declared war on Germany. The crime of sinking the "Lusitania" in May 1915 and other unoffending passenger ships carrying helpless women and children was now to be atoned for.

At this time we frequently had hospital ships passing through the Canal crowded with New Zealand wounded on their way home. As the men were allowed ashore, Canal Zone residents were asked to invite them to their homes and to entertain them for the day which many of us did. Newspapers, magazines, cakes, sweets and other comforts being sent on board for those who were too injured to be able to land. The allowing of the wounded to land was later discontinued, though the sending of gifts on board continued to be welcomed.

At Chorrillo, Corozal Road and Cirio churches I arranged special efforts to help provide amenities and comforts for our West Indian troops serving in France, several of our members having enlisted. We had our church buildings decorated with flags that had been kindly lent to us for the occasion by the British Club. The flags with their bright colours appealed immediately to our coloured people and after the service several came to me and wanted to know which countries some of them represented. In addition to national flags, several code flags had also been lent and I was asked the names of the countries represented by the yellow flag and the blue-peter. When I explained that the yellow flag represented quarantine and the blue-peter indicated that the ship was about to sail, they were greatly amused. From France several of our coloured members sent us photographs of themselves in their new uniforms of which they were very proud, while we also received souvenir decorated cards. During August 1918 three of our Church members were serving with the British Expeditionary Force in Italy.

Chapter 29

REMOVAL TO BALBOA

The United States, having entered the Great War, decided to double the strength of the 29th Infantry which was stationed at Culebra; hence, additional accommodation was required for some 800 more officers and men. As the four other civilian families had already been transferred from Culebra and we alone remained, I was not surprised when I received notice that our house would be required and that fresh accommodation would be provided for us elsewhere. Personally I was very thankful as travelling almost daily to and from the city of Panama involved the loss of far too much precious time; now there was hope of my obtaining temporary accommodation nearer to my work.

Here again a kindly providence wonderfully overruled things for our good, for, after 17 happy years living in Culebra, we were given the temporary use of a four-roomed bungalow very near to the Rev JL Wise's parsonage and Baptist church in Balboa, Panama City. It is of interest that in 1910 on presidential order the name of Balboa Basin was given to the Pacific entrance to the Canal in honour of the Spanish explorer who had partially conquered Darien and who has the distinction of having discovered the American shore of the Pacific on 25th September 1513. We had hardly settled in our new home when Mr Wise, having been recalled to the United States, left with his family much sooner than was originally anticipated and I was asked by the Home Mission Board to take charge of his church work until such time as his successor was appointed. This meant my preaching at least twice a month at Balboa Baptist church, as well as arranging for preachers to be present for the other Sundays, in addition to having three coloured churches under my own care with frequent weddings and funerals and a regular service at the Gamboa Convict Prison, 17 miles away. I also had to supervise the completion of the new Balboa church building, for which the mahogany doors and windows of the classrooms in the basement had yet to be made and hung, and the renovation and repainting of the parsonage in preparation for the arrival of Mr Wise's successor. I was going to be busy. The Government Quartermaster's Department, knowing nothing about the early departure of Mr Wise and the extra duties that would thus devolve upon me, had assigned to me accommodation almost opposite his house enabling me the more easily to supervise the work of the carpenters and painters engaged there and in the basement of the church.

This building work was hardly finished when I was able to begin work on the erection of my own new Mission House in Balboa about a mile away. Here I began work in October 1917, on my third Mission House on the Isthmus, with 18 carpenters, five labourers and two other men; past experience in the erection of other buildings had taught me that it is just as easy to supervise at the same time the work of 25 men as the work of five men, but with the difference that the work is completed just that much sooner. The house was constructed of lumber with foundations of concrete, the regulations requiring that it had to be both rat proof and bat proof. The contract for the plumbing and electric light and power was given to the Quartermaster's Department after having first obtained estimates. Additionally the regulations required that every house had to have its own dry room in which all the household linen, clothes and shoes could be kept and in which a 40 candle power electric bulb had to be kept burning day and night on account of the excessive humidity of the climate; without this light bulb boots and shoes would be coated with mildew overnight. For the same reason it was necessary to have one or two electric bulbs always burning inside the piano, otherwise the damp would cause the keys to drop as well as causing all the glue in the wooden joints not to hold.

PANAMA PADRE

As we needed no fires to warm us in the hot climate, the house was built without chimneys. Cooking and the heating of water was by means of electricity, the first time that one of my houses in Panama was so equipped; this may sound like a luxury from the missionary standpoint, but, as a Chaplain of the United States government, I was entitled to all my electric current free. Apart from the initial expense of installing the necessary electric fittings there was no further cost. Similarly, all government employees including myself were exempt from all rates and taxes.

Some delay was caused by a shortage on the Isthmus of roofing tiles but this was overcome by the arrival of a ship with a supply thereof. Furthermore, on account of the war, the cost of all building materials had doubled, or nearly so, resulting in my running short of funds. Hence, I had temporarily to lay off some of my men reducing their number to about half; additional help came shortly after from the Home Mission Board, so I was able to finish the house and move into it with my family on the last day of 1917. Before the house was even finished and the electric light installed, I conducted three marriages in my new study by the light of oil lamps. At that time my family had not moved in but I had sufficient of my study furniture already in place to make the house comfortable for those taking part in the ceremony. In the United States Canal Zone we could marry any couple, anywhere and at any time provided that the bride and groom had secured the necessary license from the Clerk of the Court, the only other restriction being that the minister conducting the marriage must be recognised as in good standing with his church or with the denomination that he represents.

With the arrival of Dr Perky as successor to the Rev JL Wise, I was able to hand over to him the care of the Balboa church and such other responsibilities that belonged to the incumbent. As I had often been working 16 or 18 hours a day and seven days a week since the departure of Mr Wise, it was a relief to be able to be free from having to undertake someone else's work in addition to one's own. But church work never stops. 1918 began with several baptismal services following one another in quick succession. In January at Chorrillo 15 candidates were baptised; the church was so crowded that aisles and doorways were all packed over an hour before the scheduled time of the service, people were even sitting on the window sills. Many other people were turned away and, as nothing was to be gained by waiting, the service was begun early. Other baptismal services followed in February and March; at the time there were 66 candidates for baptism receiving instruction in classes. But, encouraging as this may have been, it was offset by a heavy loss of members due to removals to the West Indies, Cuba, the United States and other places in search of work as the number of employees of the Canal Commission was greatly reduced. In a few months our losses by removal exceeded 140. Some of the letters received from members who had left us were not only interesting but very quaint; they usually began with apostolic injunctions, too often copied from the opening verses of Paul's Epistles and continued to the end in much the same strain, this was particularly so if they desired their letters to be read to their late fellow members of the church. For some considerable time I had made it a practice at our monthly prayer meetings to read any letters received from absent members of the congregation; this was always very popular as it helped to keep the church members in touch with those who were away, though we never retained the names of those who had left on the church register for long as it was all-important not to encourage a paper membership. However an exception was made in the case of those serving with the forces in France, whose names were retained on the register; their letters, though, were often indecipherable.

Not only were the additions to church membership encouraging, but also the generous giving was remarkable when it is remembered that the pay of an ordinary labourer was from 13 cents (6½d) to 26 cents (1/1d) per hour; yet so generous was the response that often on special occasions sums ranging from \$150 (£30) to \$300 (£60) have been given by our mission churches by means of special efforts. During my last few years of ministry on the Isthmus our total contribution from all sources averaged just over \$3000 (£600) per annum, all of which was spent on the extension of the work.

I had had in my church at Culebra two sisters whom I had baptised in 1909 and who later transferred to my Chorrillo Church. They were two of the biggest women that I had ever met, both standing well over

PANAMA PADRE

six feet in their socks and both were proportionately as big around the waist; the only time that I ever had any misgivings as to my ability to baptise anyone concerned them on account of their large size. They came from the island of Grand Cayman and were descendants from the old buccaneers (white) and native women, for the Cayman Islands were often the rendezvous where the buccaneers beached their ships for the purpose of careening them. To revert to modern times, Jamaica had experienced one of those destructive hurricanes that so often have swept the West Indies, and the minister (an Englishman) of the church at Yallahs, Jamaica had lost his Mission House and church, both being destroyed; accordingly he visited the Isthmus amongst other places in an effort to raise funds to enable him to rebuild. I called a meeting at Culebra for the purpose of assisting him; the church was crowded and the atmosphere tense as he told us the story of the hurricane and of the loss of the church. A collection was taken which amounted to just over \$100, but, as we stood to sing the last hymn, I noticed one of the two sisters leave, almost staggering out; I did not think anything about it, simply assuming that she was feeling ill. But, just as I was about to pronounce the benediction, she returned, she lived close by, and before all the congregation she came right up to the platform and placed two rolls of silver Panamanian dollars, equal to \$25 (£5), into the collection plate. It was her life savings, saved for a rainy day, but now given to help those who were destitute and who at the time may have needed it more than she did. Though I tried to reason with the woman and persuade her to take at least part of it back, she would not hear of it. Years later, whilst I was living at Balboa, when she was ill and without means, I was glad to be able to give to her some assistance from the church, a small return for her generosity in the past.

There was the case of one of my coloured members who was taken very ill such that her life was in danger. But she prayed that she might recover and promised her Lord that if He would raise her up again she would give Him an offering out of the very first money that she might receive. She was restored to health and shortly afterwards received \$8 in wages; of this sum she sent \$3 (12/6d) as her thanksgiving gift.

The Home Mission Board having set out to raise the sum of \$75 million (just over £18 million) in a matter of a few weeks, we felt that we must try and do our best to contribute as the Board had been so generous to us. However, the Board had stated that we would be allowed to retain whatever we raised as a contribution towards the purchase of a building site for Corozal Road church, Panama. So we set our goal for \$500 (£100), quite a large sum for my small churches; this target we passed, in three nights our people gave \$600 (£120). This was sacrificial giving on the part of my black congregations. As to the Board, it actually raised in gifts and promises over \$91 million (nearly £23 million) in less time than was allotted.

At Corozal Road I had been successful in securing the use of a much larger building in which to hold our services, the place in which we had been worshipping having become too small. The new building had ten rooms, but the landlord consented to knock out all the partitions to provide one large room measuring 62 feet 6 inches in length and 30 feet in width. For the new building I agreed to pay \$40 per month (£100 per year); this was one third less than the ordinary rental of the building, but the landlord knew that from the church his rent was sure. To raise additional funds for the increased rent I arranged a rally and, having recently discovered that the newly arrived British Vice-Consul at Colon was a keen Christian, evangelical and a gifted speaker, I arranged for him to take the chair. He proved to be a real accession to our Christian forces on the Isthmus; the rally resulted in the sum of \$235 (£47) being raised, nearly enough to pay the rent for the next half-year.

With 60 per cent of the children in Jamaica born out of wedlock, one cannot but wonder that some of the same evil traits should be passed on and inherited by their offspring. I recall the case of a negress, her name was Kate Smith, who, at the close of one of our Sunday night services, came into my vestry with half a dozen others, both men and women, to make her avowal to accept Jesus Christ as her personal Saviour and to follow Him. I said to her, "But Kate, you know your life is wrong, you are living with a man and you are not married"; to my knowledge her present partner was her fifth or sixth. Kate turned to me and said, "Minister, I am not going back there tonight, I will go and stay with a woman friend and tomorrow I will rent a room of my own"; this she did. Early next morning she came up to my Mission House to ask me if I could

PANAMA PADRE

give her a bundle of old newspapers with which to paper the walls of her rented room, a request I agreed to. From that day Kate never went back to her man; later I had the joy of baptising her and receiving her into church membership, in which she remained faithful to the very last.

We had no Sunday cricket on the Isthmus till the Americans came and introduced Sunday baseball, whereupon the negro concluded that there would be no harm if he should indulge in Sunday cricket. The shops in Panama had been closed on Sundays by law, but the American employees of the Canal Commission clamoured for them to be allowed to open as Sunday was the only day on which they could make their purchases; accordingly, the law was relaxed to meet their demands. This shopping, however, was not for the necessities of life, for these could all be purchased in the Government Commissaries in the Canal Zone, but for the purchase of fancy goods from the Chinese and East Indian merchants. It was painful to see the day that we tried to teach the coloured people as God's own day, and therefore sacred, converted into a day of pleasure and of sport. It is with sorrow that I say this for I count many Americans amongst my best friends and from them, both official and unofficial, I have received much kindness.



*American Sunday School picnic,
Moss Loveridge foreground left and his wife Ethel foreground right.*

Having engaged a fresh woman at Balboa as domestic help, I talked to her, two days after she was

PANAMA PADRE

appointed, and asked her if she belonged to any church; she replied in the affirmative, so I asked her which church it was that she attended. She answered, "The Baptist". Knowing that she was not a member of any church of which I was the pastor, I asked her if it was the Rev RH Thobourne's church in Guachapali, Panama City to which she belonged. "No!" was her response. On being pressed further, she told me that she belonged to Corozal Road church; suspecting that she was lying, I asked her who her minister was. She replied, "Rev Mr Loveridge". At this I said to her, "Would you know him if you saw him?"; to which she answered, "Yes". So I said to her, "Have you ever seen me before?"; to which she answered, "No". I then said to her, "I am Mr Loveridge". She looked rather foolish. Some time later I happened to overhear a conversation between her and a male member of our church who had been engaged to undertake some work in the Mission House. She told him that since coming to us she had never had an opportunity to attend church. As this was such a palpable lie, she finished work at mid-day every Sunday, I could not do otherwise but charge her with it. However, she persisted in repeating her lie and, when Ethel took her to task about it, she continued to assert that what she had was true. We discovered the real explanation later when we found that she was living a double life with a man to whom she was not married and, though we reasoned with her, she failed to change her ways, so we had to dismiss her.

One must not overlook the almost impossible housing conditions under which the great majority of the coloured people in the city of Panama were having to live. They have to rent a room in a tenement building containing from 40 to 60, or even 80, rooms, with often as many families in the building. These buildings were mostly wooden with boards only one inch thick as partitions separating one family from another, while there was a gap of two feet at the top of the partition which was left open to allow for ventilation. The roofs were of corrugated iron and without ceilings, thus exposing the occupants, particularly of the top floor, to the heat of the tropical sun beating down. The average room might be 10 by 18 feet, but rarely more. A corridor, from three to four feet wide running the whole length of the building, gave access to all rooms both upstairs and down, while a wooden balcony on the outside, also from three to four feet wide and running the whole length of the building, provided space for all washing and cooking. Should there be 15 rooms on each side of the corridor, upstairs and down, with an average of two adults and two children in each room, there would be as many as 240 people crowded into the building. Nothing could be said or undertaken in one room without it being heard by the family in the next room. Babies screaming, women quarrelling, men swearing, phonographs playing and Cornish organs wheezing all helped to contribute to the general level of noise, while some poor distracted mothers would be trying to lull their fretful babies to sleep. In the midst of such surroundings it takes the grace of God to enable a person to live the Christian life and for children to grow up with unsullied minds.

Chapter 30

PASSAGE TO THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

For some months Ethel had been very poorly, having suffered a complete nervous breakdown which caused considerable anxiety, so it was decided that she should go to the United States for rest and treatment at the Clifton Springs Sanatorium in Ontario County, New York State; her friend Mrs Witt was to accompany her. I booked a passage for her on the first steamer sailing in May 1918 and, acting under her doctor's advice, she spent the week prior to the sailing in Ancon Hospital in order to ensure the maximum amount of rest and recuperation because, with two small boys in the house and my work taking me away from the house, rest was hard to obtain at home.

Having had no holiday myself for over six years and with the additional strain of the war supplemented by a very strenuous life, I obtained the consent of the Home Mission Board to take three months leave of absence from June to enable me to be with Ethel, who was still very ill, in Clifton Springs. Accordingly, I booked my passage and that of our two boys, Guy and Stanley who were now aged eleven and six respectively, to New York City to travel on the last Panama Railroad Steamer in June 1918. Twenty four hours before sailing I received a cable from England informing me that my father had passed away on 22nd June; on account of the war transatlantic mails were taking so long that I had not even heard that he was ill.

The voyage to New York City proved to be not only interesting, as will be revealed, but also exciting, for we had naval guns and crews fore and aft and, soon after starting, the Captain had the ship's carpenter prepare a barrel which was hoisted to the top of the fore-mast as a crow's nest from which a sailor kept a look-out for lurking submarines. All through the trip, while at sea, our boats hung half-lowered over the side ready for instant use. At night most of the passengers slept with part of their day clothes on ready for any emergency and all electric bulbs had been removed from the state-rooms, cabins, deck and passageways so as to ensure that the ship was in total darkness. For the first three days we experienced somewhat rough weather in the Caribbean, but otherwise nothing unusual. Then suddenly at 3.30 on Saturday morning everybody was awakened by a series of rough grating sounds accompanied by a general tremor through the ship. Some of the passengers rushed on deck thinking that we had been torpedoed, but I confess that the only thought that flashed through my mind was that, as we were approaching Port-au-Prince, the chief harbour of Haiti, some of the crew were beginning to open the hatches and work the donkey-winches in preparation for removing some of the very heavy cargo. When my boys, who had been awakened like everybody else, asked, "Daddy, what is the matter?" I told them what I thought and told them to go to sleep again. We slept till aroused at about 6.30 a.m. by our cabin steward who informed us that the ship had run hard and fast on a coral reef, hence the noise and shaking which had awakened us. We had missed the entrance to the navigable channel by little more than 300 yards.

We quickly dressed and went on deck in time to witness the interesting process of lightening the ship by throwing some of our cargo of bags of ivory nuts and sacks of beans into the sea; nearly all of the ship's water tanks were also emptied, but it was unavailing as, on striking the reef, we had climbed five feet above our water line. As the nearest coast was ten miles away and Port-au-Prince some 55 miles, the ship's long-boat was lowered and an officer sent to the mainland in the hope of being able to communicate by telephone with Port-au-Prince to ask for help. Providentially, one of the most powerful tugs in the United

PANAMA PADRE

States navy, the "Potomac", was then in the harbour at Port-au-Prince; she responded at once to our call and arrived alongside us at 5.30 p.m., but all her best efforts to pull us off the reef were fruitless. Hence, the Commander of the "Potomac" decided to return to Port-au-Prince to obtain other help, taking with him some of our mail and a small number of our passengers who preferred sleeping in a hotel ashore to remaining on board a stranded ship on a coral reef.

On Sunday morning while I was conducting the service in the ship's Music Saloon, which was crowded with passengers, another ship hove in sight. She was towing a large lighter for us, but as she was a 10,000 ton vessel compared with our 7000 tons, she would not risk coming near our reef lest a worse thing should befall her. She lay off at some distance while the 300 ton lighter was towed alongside us; the transfer of cargo from our ship to the lighter then began. With high tide, further attempts to pull us off the reef were made, our own engines in reverse assisting, but again without success. The next morning, Monday, another steamer of about 3000 tons capacity came alongside and, into the holds of which, the greater part of our cargo was transferred. By Tuesday afternoon the transfer of cargo was complete, all our boats were lowered into the sea, all our water tanks were emptied and all the passengers were required to assemble on the stern of the ship. With the assistance once more of the "Potomac", the 3000 ton ship alongside and our own engines, the desperate combined effort enabled us to slide off the reef into deeper water to the resounding cheers of the passengers and crews. This was at about 4.00 p.m. on Tuesday, we had been on the reef for three and a half days; whilst on the reef we would have proved an excellent target for any German submarine had there been one in the vicinity. Led by the "Potomac" we made our way to Port-au-Prince reaching the harbour at 10.00 p.m. During the next four days the cargo was transferred back to the holds of our Panama Railroad Steamer, meanwhile most of the passengers including myself and the two boys went ashore and amused ourselves by sightseeing in Port-au-Prince.

Haiti might be said to be the most backward of all the Antilles; Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and all the other islands which have enjoyed the benefit of British rule being far ahead of the black republic which has suffered much through maladministration and almost annual revolutions. Many of the different Presidents who had been deposed escaped, quite a few having looted their country, to Jamaica, there to find sanctuary. Things came to such a pass that the United States was compelled to intervene and take over the administration of affairs, including control of the Customs, on the island. Under the direction of the United States, for the first time roads were constructed, bridges built, a new penitentiary erected to take the place of the old foul and evil prison and a new body of police was trained. After all these and other improvements were paid for, in addition to the cost of the occupation by the United States marines and payment of the President's salary, almost for the first time in the history of the island there was a surplus in the Treasury.

On Saturday morning our ship began taking on a supply of fresh water to refill the empty tanks, it had to be brought some distance along the coast. Unfortunately one of the lighters conveying the water ran aground; in consequence several hours were lost, for our ship had to wait till the lighter which was then pumping water into our vessel had finished and retraced its way around the coast for a fresh supply to replace that which should have been furnished by the lighter which had run aground. On the Sunday morning, before our ship sailed, the Band of the Palace Guard, trained by the American marines and comprising 55 instruments, came to the quayside and serenaded the passengers. We finally sailed, but did not go far; for 15 minutes after having left the wharf and after having travelled half a mile we ran hard and fast onto a sandbar. Once again all efforts under our own steam to refloat the ship were unavailing, so we had to again summon the "Potomac" for assistance. I shall never forget the amusement of the American sailors for, as the "Potomac" came alongside, they began calling to our ship's Captain, calling "Where is Jonah?"

Initial attempts at refloating us did not succeed, so it was decided to await the evening when the rise of the tide would give us another 18 inches. As the bunkers of the "Potomac" were short of coal, her Commander made his help conditional upon our Captain furnishing him with an additional supply of coal; hence, all Sunday afternoon sailors and firemen were busy transferring coal in baskets from our ship to

PANAMA PADRE

theirs. Meanwhile a strong haze came offshore and it was evident from the wind that swept down the mountainsides that a gale was brewing not far away. Once more with the assistance of the "Potomac" we tried to leave the sandbar, this time with success, but only to receive instructions from the Navy Department that, as there was a hurricane blowing outside, we were not to proceed till the morning. Accordingly, at 5.30 on Monday morning we made a start. For the first five hours as we made our way on the Caribbean Sea all was fairly smooth, but as soon as we reached the open ocean we found ourselves caught in the tail-end of the hurricane and had to put up with some rough seas; by evening the storm had lessened.

Next day our naval crew had gun practice for the second time, while the passengers had to put on their life-belts and have life boat drill. The voyage became uneventful until we reached the Nantucket coast, about a day's sailing from New York City; here we encountered some rough weather when we ran into one of the grandest electrical storms that I have ever witnessed. The repeated roar of the thunder was like the firing of the broadside of a battleship, while the flashes of lightning as they shot along the iron decks illuminated the whole ship. I took Guy and Stanley out and walked them up and down on the deck that they might grow up not to be afraid of a thunder-storm. Though we had been travelling all the voyage without navigation lights the storm was such that the Captain issued orders for the starboard, port and mast-head lights to be lit to avoid possible collision in the darkness. It was well known that submarines were operating in the vicinity, but we were pitching and tossing so much that any submarine would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to successfully fire a torpedo at us. In the height of the storm and in darkness we passed the Nantucket Lightship; little did we think that within less than 24 hours she, with two or three other vessels in the area through which we were passing, would be lying at the bottom of the sea. It had been the storm which had mercifully preserved us.

After a voyage which had lasted 17 days instead of seven, it was late afternoon on the Saturday when we reached New York City. Here I had to hunt for a hotel with a vacant room, this was far from easy as all available accommodation seemed to be already occupied; however, after several fruitless attempts I found a suitable room. On Sunday morning the boys and I set out intending to worship at the Fifth Avenue Baptist church but found it closed. We then tried two or three other churches in Fifth Avenue but with no better success till just as I felt like giving up the attempt as hopeless, we came to the Brick Presbyterian church which was open and, to my great delight, I saw Dr Hugh Black's name upon the notice board. It appeared that during the very hot weather in New York City, so many people go away to the seaside for their holidays that it is quite customary for some of the churches to close and for the few remaining members of the congregations to unite with those of churches which had agreed to remain open. We entered the church and heard Dr Black preach an unforgettable sermon which gave us hope as it was so applicable to those critical days just as the tide was beginning to turn in our favour after four years of bitter conflict in the Great War.

Before leaving the Isthmus, and again while stranded at Haiti, I had communicated with Ethel by cable only to learn that she was no better; hence, I was anxious to reach her as soon as possible, but as we had arrived at New York City too late on Saturday night to make the 350 mile journey to Clifton Springs, I booked our seats with sleeping berths on the Pullman for Guy and Stanley for the night express on Monday. Hence, Monday was spent sightseeing, we visited the Bronx Park Zoo and the Natural History Museum and finally arrived at Grand Central Station to catch our overnight train for Clifton Springs. At 4.30 a.m. the express stopped at a little wayside station for us to disembark; it was Clifton Springs. It was pitch dark and we were the only passengers to alight; as soon as we alighted the train departed, while the only railroad employee locked up the booking office and started to blow out the only two oil lamps of which the station could boast. I asked him how far it was to the Sanatorium and which direction we should follow; he replied that it was a good half mile and that as he was going part of the way he would gladly accompany us as far as his house and we should benefit from the light of his lantern, for which we were thankful. Our trunks had been dropped at the previous station and would follow by a later train as Clifton Springs station did not handle luggage at this early hour. So we picked up our hand baggage and followed the railroad employee;

PANAMA PADRE

though dark it was a lovely walk in the clear, crisp early morning air along what were little more than country lanes, for, apart from the Sanatorium, Clifton Springs consists of little more than a handful of small houses with a few shops and scattered farms.

It was still dark when we reached the Sanatorium at 5.00 a.m., so I asked permission, as we had been travelling all night, that my boys and I might be allowed to sit inside and be provided with breakfast when it was available. This we were provided with at 7.00 o'clock and an hour later I was allowed to see Ethel who was in an adjacent building. I was distressed to find her still very poorly and suffering from an infected throat following an operation. Hence I postponed our proposed journey together to Toronto to meet two of Ethel's sisters, Edie and May who had both removed from Kingston, Jamaica to Toronto, and I obtained accommodation in the village for Guy, Stanley and myself. For the next five weeks I and the boys daily visited their mother, taking her out for an hour or two as often as her doctor would allow.

Learning that my young brother, Alec, was due in New York City returning from Australia to England because of the earlier death of our father, I left our two boys in the care of our landlady and took the train for Albany, there to catch the river steamer down the Hudson to New York City; a distance of 150 miles travelling through most beautiful scenery. Alec reached New York first and, knowing that I was coming by the river steamer, thought that he would take the up-river steamer as far as Yonkers, a distance of 15 miles, to meet me on my down-river steamer. Unfortunately, as I did not know of this last-minute arrangement, I was not on the look-out for him so that by the time that he had searched through the 3000 other passengers on board and found me, our steamer had nearly reached New York City. Alec was to die two years later, aged 39 years, of tuberculosis.

On my return to Clifton Springs I found Ethel little or no better, but my furlough from the Isthmus was passing rapidly and, keenly as I felt about leaving her, I felt that the only course open to me was that of fulfilling my promise to go to Canada. We agreed that I and the boys would go to Toronto and that should Ethel one day feel well enough to travel she would wire me and I would return as far as Buffalo, New York, to meet her and to escort her the rest of the way to Toronto. So a few days later the boys and I left for Canada, stopping in transit at Buffalo where we saw the house to which President McKinley was carried after his assassination and where he breathed his last; we also saw the building in which Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt took the oath of office immediately after McKinley's death. We took the train to Niagara to visit the famous falls; what impressed me most when we disembarked from the train at Niagara station was the sound of the falls though we were still a mile away. There was no denying the majesty of the falls. Proceeding on our journey it took us three hours to cross the corner of Lake Ontario by steamer to reach Toronto. Some of the scenery in the area was particularly grand; the Thousand Islands in the mouth of the St Lawrence River being exceptionally fine and well worth a trip to see.

Edie and May Pratt both made us most welcome in Toronto and we were not long there before I received the hoped for telegram from Ethel stating that she was on her way to Toronto to join us; accordingly I took the next boat and train back to Buffalo in order to meet her. Though very tired and far from well, Ethel's rate of recovery quickly increased with the more bracing air of Toronto; the presence of her two sisters also helped. Ethel had spent four months in the Sanatorium where she had received the utmost kindness and care.

While staying in Toronto I was invited to give a missionary address, entitled "Won by one", at Jarvis Street Baptist church, of which Dr TT Shields was the minister. I was also asked to preach at two Presbyterian churches in the country, some forty miles apart, the friends in each case collecting and returning me by motor car, quite a novel experience for me. Thinking that I might feel the cold after the tropics, I was amused at their providing me with a magnificent bear skin rug, for which, however, I had no need. One was almost forcibly reminded of old England by the Yorkshire puddings and apple dumplings, the first that I had had since last in England six years before. I was interested to observe at the rear of the chapels great long sheds capable of holding half a dozen or more buggies, with their horses, which used to bring their owners to the services from the outlying farms before the advent of motor cars.

PANAMA PADRE

Through the kindness of the Rev George Smith, Canadian Secretary for the Evangelical Union of South America, we were invited to stay on his farm near Wyevale, not far from Georgiana Bay, Lake Huron, while he and his wife were away. This was a very welcome change as it was proving to be expensive for the four of us to live in a boarding house, but it also meant rather strenuous work for Ethel and myself as we had to look after the homestead as well as make our own butter, bake our own bread and undertake other duties of which we had no previous experience. To buy meat and groceries we drove once a week to Wyevale, five miles away, where we made our purchases at the village store and also collected any letters. When driving over the beaten-mud trail between the farm and the village we would pass a typical old log cabin, stoutly built and primitive but long abandoned, which dated back to the days of the Wild North West. The cabin brought to mind stories of Red Indians of bygone days in their war paint and feathers. The farm land formed a clearing which was surrounded by wooded country; the autumn tints on the maple and poplar trees were, at the time of our visit, beautiful beyond description. As we had heard that only a week or two before our arrival five bears had appeared on the outskirts of the adjoining farm, I made several journeys into the woods always hoping that I might see one; but my efforts were in vain as the bears failed to show themselves again.

After a stay at Wyevale of one month it was time to think about our return journey, so I wrote to the steamship company in New York City; on account of the war the company was not allowed to give either the date of sailing or the name of the ship, but advised us to come to New York City on or about a certain date and to call at the office where we would be given further information. Accordingly, with some reluctance, we packed our trunks and left the farm. On arrival at New York City I went to the shipping office to purchase our steamer tickets; there I was informed that it would be necessary for Ethel and I to go to another building in order to make a declaration concerning our baggage, all of which, according to war regulations, had to be sent 48 hours before the departure of the ship to the Customs for searching.

Hence, to make the declaration, we went to a large building on the floor of which there must have been about 150 small tables at each of which an Army Sergeant or Corporal was sitting. Taking our seats at one of the tables, the Sergeant asked me if I had any letters or maps in the baggage that I would be taking to the Isthmus. "Yes", I answered, "there are some maps in the back of my Bible and some correspondence with my Mission Board". After a number of other questions and the completing of forms and witnessing of signatures, I asked the Sergeant, "Now, when do you want me to send my baggage for examination?" He replied, "Just a minute, Sir", and taking my papers in his hand he disappeared into a private office. On returning he said, "The Colonel has authorised me to stamp your papers, 'Baggage exempt from examination' ". I was more than surprised because I was returning to the Isthmus on a government ship on which were travelling several hundred Canal employees, all of whom were on the payroll of the United States government, with their families. Yet here was I, an Englishman and therefore an alien, receiving this courtesy when the rest of my fellow passengers were having to submit to having their baggage searched. True I was a Chaplain of the United States government on the Isthmus and a recognised minister, but even this hardly explained such generous treatment. On the same ship was travelling an English lady who was engaged in missionary work amongst the San Blas Indians; the Army had taken from her for examination her Bible, because she had some notes written in the margin of some of the pages, and confiscated a quantity of old picture postcards that had been stuck back to back so that only the pictures could be seen, these had been given to her for distribution amongst the children of the Indians.

Before leaving New York City I visited Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, to see the grave (grave no. 12807) of my brother Ernest; he had been living and working in New York but had died in Brooklyn of scarlet fever in 1911 when aged 27 years.

The voyage back to the Isthmus was uneventful and took the customary seven days although we docked at Charlestown, Massachusetts, for one night. On board ship were the usual naval guns and gun crews. It was not till we had safely reached the Isthmus that we learned that our ship had been carrying dynamite for blasting purposes on the Isthmus, for the sake of the peace of mind of the passengers we had not been informed.

PANAMA PADRE

After having tied up to the wharf at Cristobal, as my family and I passed down the gangway, the first person to greet me was the Head of the United States Customs who asked me if we had had a nice holiday. He next asked what baggage we had; on my pointing out our numerous trunks and suitcases, for we had been away from the Isthmus for over three months, he immediately called one of his Customs Inspectors and instructed him to pass all our luggage without examination. So once again, as I witnessed what some of my fellow passengers were having to endure in having their baggage searched, I was more than grateful for the treatment that we received.

Chapter 31

FAREWELL

We were not long back on the Isthmus before I had some anxious moments that gave me concern for the future of my family; first Ethel was ill again and then both Guy and Stanley were running high temperatures. What was the right thing to do? Should we all return to Great Britain; should I send the three of them to Great Britain and remain in Panama alone to carry on the work? These questions had to be answered.

Church work was flourishing in spite of many upheavals caused by the end of the Great War. At both Chorrillo and Corozal Road churches we were having good congregations and many applications for baptism; at the former we were worshipping in the much larger hired building and filling it and at the latter there had been 60 additional members since my return from the United States. Our usual Sunday school outing took place at the close of May 1919, this was attended by over 500 scholars from Chorrillo and Corozal Road and was accompanied by the Silver City Band. The congregation at Cirio church increased by ten new members; I calculated that we had 104 new members in ten months. Another interesting event was the return of our own church members who had been serving with our forces in France. We gave a Welcome Back reception at which about 400 people were present including about 100 ex-servicemen in uniform. The building was tastefully decorated with flags and a number of addresses and testimonies were made. At the close all our guests were treated to ice cream and cake.

Friday, 15th August 1919, a public holiday, was a great day in Panama as it marked the 400th anniversary of the founding of the old city of Panama. The present-day city of Panama was founded on 21st January 1673. I took the family, including Ethel's sisters Edie and May who were on a visit to us at the time, to see the procession. Though not very long, it was by far the best of its kind that I had seen in Panama. In addition to the usual police and fire brigade contingents, United States cavalry and band, the Republican band and a band of boys accompanied by their padres from the Roman Catholic orphanage, there were three allegorical floats. The first represented the bow of one of the old Spanish caravels and the signing of a document commemorating the founding of the old city; there were also San Blas Indians in their native costumes and finery on the float. The second very realistically described the destruction and sacking of the old city by Morgan and his buccaneers; there were "wounded" and "dead" and a portion of the burnt ruins, the pirates being armed with cutlasses and blunderbusses. The third float represented modern Panama with a car-load of Panama belles in native costumes. The whole display was a credit to the promoters and proved to be instructive to Guy and Stanley.

That same day we visited Old Panama and saw the old watergate, the remains of the old fort where the drawbridge used to be and the part of the old city wall with Las Bovidias (the arches or vaults) underneath, these were the damp and foul dungeons of the old Chiriqui prison. I also took my family and guests to see the church of La Merced (Our Lady of Mercy) where I showed them the effigy in a glass coffin of Jesus Christ in a purple robe, a painful travesty. Before this and other images one saw women engaged in prayer.

But the shadows continued to lengthen. Ethel was taken ill again and no sooner had she rallied than she and the two boys went down with influenza. Our doctor said that a complete change of climate was necessary if Ethel's life was to be spared. For some time I had foreseen this, but it is not easy to break away from the old moorings and to start life again elsewhere; I had enjoyed 19 years of happy and strenuous

PANAMA PADRE

service in Panama. It was seven years since we had last visited England and the Great War had occasioned many changes in that time. During that time Ethel had also lost both her parents and a brother, and my father had died.

Reluctantly, very reluctantly, on 18th August 1919 I sent, to the United States, my resignation to my Mission Board, with which for so many years I had enjoyed such happy association. The Corresponding Secretary of the Board, Dr BD Gray, replied on 29th August 1919 with a letter that began:

"Dear Bro. Loveridge,

I am just in receipt of yours of the 18th and hasten to reply. The first sentence of your letter brings real grief to my heart, containing as it does your resignation from our work to take effect September 30th. You cannot know how sincerely I regret the prospect of your leaving us, for you have been faithful and efficient in the largest measure and you have the hearty confidence of our entire Board, not to mention my own personal confidence and affection for you..."

On my resignation having been placed before the Home Mission Board, I received a letter from the Board, dated 12th September 1919, which contained the following sentence:

"You have wrought so faithfully and efficiently that we are grieved beyond measure over your retirement from the work down there..."

The letter enclosed the gift of a cheque for \$500 (£100) towards my travelling expenses. Other letters expressing regret at my impending departure were received from the Minister's Association and signed by all the Protestant ministers on the Isthmus including the Archdeacon of the Episcopal church, from other church organisations and from individual ministers.

On Sunday, 31st August, I conducted my last baptismal service on the Isthmus, but I did not inform my churches till their communion services on the following Sunday. It was not easy for them, or for myself, for the people took it very much to heart and there were many wet eyes.

I shall never forget the distress of Henry Clarke, my District Visitor, when I told him that I felt that the time had come, on account of the health of my wife and of my boys, for me to resign and return to Great Britain. Henry just broke down and cried as he said, "Minister, I always thought you would have remained long enough to bury me". It was hard to think of parting; for 19 years I had received nothing but devotion and loyalty from him and we had always had happy fellowship together.

After I had left the Isthmus it was Henry Clarke who was the faithful advisor and comforter of the people; it was Henry who visited the sick, conducted services and officiated at funerals; it was Henry who did much to keep the churches together and encourage the members to be steadfast till the appointment of another pastor. It was no wonder that his own people lovingly spoke of him as "Father Clarke" and of his wife as "Mother Clarke". But 18 months after I had left the Isthmus, Henry had an attack of fever. His new minister, the Rev Stephen Witt visited him and, as he rapidly grew worse, arranged for his removal to Santo Tomas Hospital in Panama. There Mr Witt daily called to see him, but within three days Henry passed away.

Mrs Witt, the new pastor's wife, informing me of Henry's death and funeral, wrote:

"So well known and loved and respected, all through Panama, was he, that the news of his death flew from one to another until it was estimated there were two thousand at his funeral service, in the church and out at the grave side. He died at 10.30 p.m. on Saturday night and the service was held at 4 p.m. on Sunday afternoon. It was nothing less than marvellous to us to see the gathering at such short notice. It was a sight worth seeing..."

PANAMA PADRE

Of his funeral, the "Star and Herald", the leading Panama newspaper, devoted nearly a whole column to an account of it; I cull from it this short statement:

"One of the largest and most orderly and well-conducted Funeral processions took place on Sunday last when the mortal remains of Deacon Henry Clarke, a native of Jamaica, who died on Saturday night last at the Santo Tomas Hospital was laid to rest in the Herera Cemetery. Fully two thousand persons paid their last respects to a man who had shown undying devotion to the propagation of the Gospel for twenty-two years. The deceased was an active Christian worker. He started his religious activities under the pastorship of the Rev Moss Loveridge, who always had a word of praise for him."

At the funeral, as also at the memorial service held a week later, were present and took part English, American and West Indian ministers, all paying a well deserved tribute to Henry Clarke.

To return to 1919, my farewell services were held on the Sunday and Monday, 21st and 22nd September. At Chorrillo on the Monday evening the church was packed to its utmost capacity, standing room was at a premium and many had to be turned away. Amongst the speakers there were the Hon William Jennings Price, United States Minister to the Republic of Panama; the Rev S Witt, who occupied the chair; the Rev PC Walker and the Rev Tylerbest. Many were the kind things said, followed by the gift of a cheque representing all the churches. It was also not easy for Ethel to part from her Women's Meetings, for she was much esteemed and loved by the women. The "Star and Herald" gave four and a half columns to its account of the farewell services and the "West Indian Churchman" gave its front page to my impending departure.

As a retiring Chaplain of the United States government I was entitled to free transport, and Ethel and the boys to nominal rates, on the steamer to New York City. We had our passages booked on the SS "Allianca", to travel two days after the farewell services, but alas this was not to be for the "Allianca" broke down on her passage to Colon and all her passengers had to be transferred to another ship. Our departure had to be postponed for another week to the sailing of the SS "Colon" on 1st October. However, this delay had serious repercussions for us, for as our steamer approached New York harbour the passengers were informed that a longshoreman's strike had just begun and that the men would neither handle ship's cargo nor passengers' baggage and that all sailings out of New York had been indefinitely cancelled. So I had to handle all our baggage, both numerous trunks and suitcases, and trundle them on a longshoreman's barrow the whole length of an exceptionally long pier to the street and there transfer them to a taxi. After trying three hotels in vain we finally were able to secure accommodation in a boarding house in Brooklyn through the kind help of an old missionary friend. From there I made almost daily trips to the Cunard office, with which we had already booked, and to the British Consulate in the hope of hearing of some ship sailing, but for three long weeks I met with no success. But at last I was able to secure a passage on the RMS "Vasari" sailing on 31st October 1919; this vessel would not then have departed had not the clerks from the Cunard shipping office themselves loaded the passengers' luggage and the mail.

The crossing of the Atlantic was the slowest trip from New York to home that I ever made; we took 14 days. On approaching the River Mersey in England we ran into bitterly cold winter weather which we shall not soon forget, for coming from the tropics we felt the intense cold all the more keenly. On arrival at Liverpool my brother Lawton kindly met us. That first night in England was spent in a hotel where not even money could purchase for us a fire in the bedroom in which we could not sleep for the cold. The same bitter weather marked all our journey to Clevedon, Somerset, to where my family had removed upon the death of my father; all the streams and standing water were frozen over and the countryside was under a deep blanket of snow. Was this the complete change of climate that our doctor had ordered only a few months before? The mother country could hardly have given us a more freezing reception, but the warmth of my mother's and my sisters', Daisy's and Joy's, welcome on our reaching home could not have been surpassed.

PANAMA PADRE

END